



Trapped by CorruptedRoyalty

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Summary: Rosalyn Henderson loved her brother and mother and that why she hated how she felt trapped by responsibilities that someone her age shouldn't have. Because of those responsibilities, she was going to be trapped in this feeling of misery forever. It never occurred that to feel joy in her life, all she needed was a boy who takes more time doing his hair than she does. (Slow Burn)

1. The Vanishing of Will Byers

Rosalyn Henderson was staring at the coffee maker, waiting for it to finish making the pot. She did a graveyard shift as a kennel attendant at Hawkins Veterinary Clinic. It closes at 10 pm, but someone had to stay overnight to make sure the animals got their medicine and care. When the old night kennel attendant quit, Lyn did her boss, Penelope Myung, a favor and took some of the graveyard shifts until she could find a replacement.

The phone rang. "Can you get the phone dear, I'm making pancakes." Claudia Henderson asks her daughter.

While she didn't give a verbal answer, she moves to grab the phone from off the wall. "Hello, Henderson's resident." She yawned.

"Hello Lyn, this is Joyce Byers." It was the mother of Will Byers who was a friend of her brother, Dustin.

"Hey Ms. Byers, is something wrong?" Lyn moves her brows to meet in the middle. It wasn't like her to call for a chat. She was a busy single mother.

"I was wondering if Will is at your house. Did he spend the night?" She asks.

She looks around the kitchen in search of the quite well manner child. "Is Will here? Did he spend the night?" She put her hand over the bottom half of the receiver to ask her brother.

"No, last time I saw him was last night when we rode our bikes home." Dustin shoves a piece of pancake in his mouth that their mom put in front of him.

"He's not here. Dustin said that they rode home on their bikes together last night. Did Will not make it home?" She asks making the room goes silent. Dustin and her mother stop what they were doing to stare at her.

"You know what I think he went to school early. Yeah, that's what he

did. Thank you. Bye." She sounds like she was trying to convince herself more than the teenager.

"Bye." She hung up the phone, no longer tired as adrenaline was pumping through her veins from the fear she was feeling for the preteen.

"Is Will okay?" Dustin asks his sister.

"He wasn't there when they wake up and they're not sure if he made it home last night. His mom thinks he went to school early." She explains with a pit in her stomach.

"Yeah, that sounds like Will." A smile replaces Dustin's frown. Lyn and her mom share an unconvinced look.

She went over and poured herself a cup of coffee. "I can give you a ride." She offered even though she knew the answer.

"I'll ride my bike with Lucas and Mike." He told her like he had been doing since he meets his three best friends on the first day of the fourth grade.

"Are you sure you should be driving? You just got home an hour ago, you didn't get any sleep." Claudia narrows her eyes at her daughter.

"I slept eight hours before I went to work." Lyn grit her teeth knowing where this was going.

"I don't know why you even have that job." Her mother rolls her eyes.

"I'm not hungry." She drank the rest of her coffee and put the mug in the sink. She walks out of the house, ignoring her mother yelling that breakfast was the most important meal of the day. She sat in the driver's seat of the black 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle SS 454 that had two white stripes going down the hood that she named Darling. She took deep breaths as she calmed down. It took everything in her not to snap at her mother, that she had to have a job because she refused to get one.

The summer before she went to the ninth grade, her father divorced her mother for a woman closer to her age than his. Her mom got the

house, the kids, the van, and Darling. Claudia got a few jobs but quit all of them in the first week. Then, she sold their old house and moves them to Hawkins. It's a cheaper smaller safer town, she told them.

Her Dad was a CEO at a top tech company. His alimony and child support checks covered the mortgage and bills with just enough left over for groceries if it was budget right. But, it didn't cover clothes, school supplies, extracurricular, birthdays and Christmas gifts. She didn't feel like Dustin and her should miss out because their mom refused to give up her dream of being a housewife despite the fact she wasn't a wife anymore.

A knock on the car window took her out of her resentful thoughts. She rolls the window down. "Hey buddy, change your mind on the ride." She smiles weakly at her brother.

"No, I'm just checking if you're okay?" He looks his sister over, taking in the bags under her eyes. He hated asking her for things, but even when he didn't ask she somehow found out. Like when he came home from school one day to find the walkie-talkie on his bed.

"Don't worry about me. You go to school and scold Will for me." She reaches out to ruffle his curls.

He moves his head out of her reach and speeds off on his bike. She chuckled as she started up the car. Her brother was a preteen who no longer beam up at her for giving him affection. She drove the route that she drove some many times before, she felt like she could do it with her eyes closed. She parks in the Hawkins High School parking lot. She got out of her car and enters the school to walk down the hallways, ignoring all the stares she got. She was used to them by now, being dubbed the mystery girl because she didn't have any friends. Between her job, school work, and family, she didn't have the time for a social life.

Steve Harrington leans against his locker as he watches Rosalyn Henderson walk past him not even sparing him a glance. Not that she ever did in the two and a half years of living in Hawkins. He still vividly remembers being in homeroom the first day of freshman year,

the day that the brunette beauty walked into his life. He gave out a dreamy sigh as the thought of how her hips sway as she made her way to her desk and the way she flips her hair over her shoulder gracefully as she sat down. The teachers made them introduce themselves like most of them didn't know each other all their lives. She, being the only stranger had everyone's eyes on her. She blushed and gave a small smile as she said her name and favorite movie, Jaws.

For two years, he asked her out to every dance and horror movie that came out. She always said no, most of the time she was nice about it, but if he nagged her she would shoot him the nasty glare he had ever seen. He wondered if she noticed he back off this year, to try and take a different approach. Who was he kidding, even if she did notice she was probably relieved. He supposed some good came out of it because now he had Nancy, a girl that liked him just as much as he liked her.

He pushes himself off the locker and made his way to the bathroom, where he was supposed to meet Nancy.

During lunch, Rosalyn walks over to the middle school. She was making her way to the front office to see Sheriff Hopper walking out of there with three of her four boys behind him. "Please say you're not here for Will Byers." She pleads.

"What do you know about Will Byers?" He asks her, but she looks past him to see all three preteens sadly nod their heads.

"Oh my god," She put her hands on her knees as she hyperventilated. She was imagining a scared wounded Will tied up in a predator's basement.

The three boys were quick to push past Hopper to comfort her. Mike and Dustin rub her back as Lucas kneels over to be face to face with her. "It's going to be okay. We are going to find him."

"Before you know it, you'll have all your duckling back in the pond," Mike reassured her.

"And Will be yelling at you that he's not a duck." Dustin let out a dry chuckle remembers how much the pet name bothers his missing friend.

"Who is this?" The Sheriff screams not liking being ignored.

"She's my sister!" Dustin shouts back at him. If Lyn wasn't panicking she would have scolded the boy for yelling at a cop.

"She used to babysit us," Mike explains.

"Now, she's our friend," Lucas updates the officers. She was a unique combination of authority figure and a cool older sibling. While she made sure they didn't get into any real trouble, she also got them into R rated movies and taught them how to pull pranks on the bullies at their school.

She became a big part of their group so naturally that no one in the group thought anything of it that a teenager was hanging out with kids five years her junior.

"WILL! WILL! WILL BYER! DUCKLING!" She yells out as moves her flashlight around the dark woods. The police were holding a search for the missing boy and they ask for volunteers.

"Yeah, like he would come out for that." Jonathan Byers, the missing boy's brother, let out a dry chuckle.

"Then you don't know your brother. He was going to be the hiding and seek champ, but when I call him that he jumps out of the clothes hamper to tell me never to call him that." She snickers.

"He was amazing at hiding and seeks." He smiles.

"He is, not was. He's out there, so don't start mourning him." She reaches out to grab his free hand to give it a squeeze.

"Thanks. I don't know what I was saying." He hung his head.

"I think we subconsciously always prepare for the worst." She told him. They walk together holding hands. To an outsider, it would

seem romantic, but the two knew it was friendly support for the other was ready to break down.

They search for hours but came out empty. The police department was sending everyone home. "Are you sure you don't need any help?" She asks the Byers, who was going home to make missing flyers.

"Oh honey, you did more than enough. Go home and get some rest." Joyce smiles at her son's friend.

"Alright, call me if you need anything." She got in her car and made her way home. She parked in the garage. She was about to turn off the engine when she noticed that Dustin's bike wasn't leaning against the wall where it normally is. "Should have known those damn kids wouldn't listen to me when told them to stay home." She put the car back in drive and got back on the road. She drove the way Will would have rode his bike home. She watches along the edge of the forest. "Bingo," Pops out of her mouth when she saw three bikes laying down the side of the road. She parks her car and got out.

She was about to scream in rage when she saw figures coming out of the forest, but it left her when she saw there were four of them, not three. She got out of the car, not caring that she was instantly soaked to the bone. "Will!" She calls out as she rushes over to them.

She stopped in her tracks when she noticed it wasn't Will. It was another child wearing a long yellow t-shirt. She narrows her eyes to see better in the rain. She saw that it was a girl, a bald girl. The girl backs away scared when the teen tried to get closer to her. "It's alright, this is my sister. She's good, I promise." Dustin reassured her.

"What's going on?" She looks to the boys.

"We found her in the forest. We think she in trouble." Mike told her.

She looks back to the girl who was shivering. She was looking around like she was ready to run at the slight sign of danger. "She hasn't said a word." Lucas eyes the girl suspiciously.

"Are you trying to get away from bad people?" She bent down to whisper to her. The girl looks her up and down slowly before

nodding her head.

"Then let's get you the hell out of here." She reaches her hand out. The girl stares at the hand for a while before puts hers on it. Lyn grabs the child's hand to lead her out the forest and to her car. She put her in the passenger seat.

"We're going to take her to my house. I can sneak her into the basement. Mom doesn't go in there since it became our hangout spot." Mike told her.

"Okay, put your bikes in the back of the car." She pops the trunk. She got in the car to turn on the heater.

"Here," She grabs the jacket Dustin left in the backseat and hands it to her. The younger girl grabs it and rubs it all over her to dry herself off. "Not what I meant, but that works too." Her intention was for the girl to wear it, but whatever works for her.

She got back out of the car to let the boys in the backseat before settled into the driver's seat to make her way to Mike's house. The boys started asking the little girl one question after another not even giving her time to answer.

From the side of Lyn's eye, she saw the girl reaching for the door handle. "Quiet boys! You're overwhelming her. Let her get dried off and warm up. Then you can ask her questions politely and she'll answer the one she wants too." Her glare shut the boys up.

The rest of the ride was in silence. She parked in front of the Wheeler's house. "Come on, let get you inside." They sneak the girl into the basement.

2. The Weirdo on Maple Street

Rosalyn walks out of the bathroom in the Wheeler's basement. The boys were crowding the unknown girl who was sitting on the couch, asking her all types of questions.

"Is there a number we can call for your parents?" Mike asks.

"Where's your hair? Do you have cancer?" Dustin stares at her shaved head.

"Did you run away?" Lucas raises an eyebrow.

"Are you in some kind of trouble?" Mike leans in.

"Is that blood?" Lucas points to the spots of red on her shirt.

"That's enough boys. You're not even giving her time to answer. You're freaking her out!" Lyn scolds them.

"She's freaking me out!" Lucas defends himself.

"I bet she's deaf." Dustin reaches out his arms to clap in her face, making her jump. "Not deaf." He told them.

"No duh, she's not deaf. She nods her head in the wood when I ask her a question." She smacks her brother in the back of the head.

"All right, that's enough? She's just scared and cold." Mike put an end to his friend's antics. He walks over to grab some clothes from a laundry hamper. "Here, these are clean." He gave them to her.

She put the clothes to the side and stood up to put her hands on the bottom of her shirt to lift it up. The boy turns around and covers their eyes. "Oh, my God. Oh, my God." Dustin chants.

Lyn grabs the girl's hands to stop her. "No honey, not here. There a bathroom over there, where you can have privacy. You don't take your clothes off in front of people, especially strangers." She told the younger girl, who nodded her head although she still looks confused about it. She grabs the clothes Mike was letting her wear and led the

girl to the bathroom. She went to close the door but the girl grabs it.

"You don't want it closed?" Lyn tilts her head.

"No." She said simply.

"Oh, so you can speak. That's good. How about this, we'll keep the door open this much?" She grabs the doorknob and slowly pulls the door that still had the younger females hand on it so it was only open about two inches. "Is that good?" She asks the girl. As a response, the girl nods her head. "Alright, you can come back out when you're done changing and we'll decide what to do next. I swear to you that I'll make sure the bad people don't get you." Lyn said, even though she had no idea how powerful these bad people were. All she knows is she sees a lost vulnerable duckling that she wants to save.

"Swear to me?" The girl tilts her head.

"It means that I'm going to keep you safe no matter what." She explains to the girl. Lyn was surprised when the girl smiled weakly at her. "I'll let you get changed." She turns around and walks over to the boys, who were arguing with each other. "What's going on?" She asks them.

"Oh, maybe the fact, that we have an escapee from Pennhurst in the bathroom. We shouldn't have brought her here. Now, she knows where Mike lives." Lucas whisper yells to them.

"Like Michael Myers," Dustin said with wide eyes.

"She's not Michael Myers. If she was we would be dead by now." She rolls her eyes.

"So you just wanted to leave her out in that storm?" Mike ignores her to argue some more with his two peers.

"Yes! We went out to find Will, not another problem." Lucas points out.

"I think we should tell your mom." Dustin turns to Mike.

"I second that." Lucas nods his head.

"Who's crazy now?" Mike shook his head at his friends.

"How is that crazy?" Lucas stares at Mike like he was the crazy one.

"Cause, we weren't supposed to be out tonight, remember?" Mike reminds his friends. Lyn reminds herself to think of a way to creative punish Dustin later, so their mom wouldn't find out.

"So?" Dustin asks.

"So if I tell my mom. She will tell both of your moms," Mike tells them.

"Oh, man." Dustin realizes how much trouble he would get into.

"Our houses become Alcatraz." Lucas groans.

"Stop being selfish, that girl could be in real trouble" She glares down at the three boys.

"It's not selfish. If we get grounded we can't find Will." Mike matches the teen's glare for the first time. Lyn widens her eyes in shock, realizing the boy was being honest. That he wasn't trying to weasel his way out of trouble, he wanted to help his friend and the girl. He just needs to figure out a plan on how to do both. "All right, here's the plan. She sleeps here tonight." He thought of something.

"You're letting a girl..." Dustin shook his head not knowing how he felt about a maybe psychopath sleeping in his friend's house. What if she slit Mike's and his family's throats in their sleep?

"Just listen! In the morning, she sneaks around my house, goes to the front door and rings my doorbell. My mom will answer and know exactly what to do. She'll send her back to Pennhurst or wherever she comes from. We'll be totally in the clear. And tomorrow night, we go back out. And this time, we find Will." Mike explains his plan.

"Okay, that sounds good." She nods her head, agreeing with the plan. The door squeaks open, making the group turn their heads. "Hey, come, we'll make you a fort to sleep in for the night." She waves the girl over. The girl watches as the teen and preteens made a fort out of chairs and a blanket.

"Goodnight, I'll see you tomorrow." Lyn smiles at the girl. In a panic the girl grabs her arm, she swears to keep her safe and now she was leaving. Dustin's eyes went wide at the maybe psycho grab his sister. "Hey, it's alright. Mike won't let anything happen to you. I'll be back in the morning. I can't stay or it will raise suspicions." She told the young girl. She nods her head and let go of her arm.

Mike guides her into the fort as Dustin and Lucas climb the stairs. "Here you go. This is my sleeping bag." He hands it to her.

Lyn walks fast up the stairs after she saw the boys left her. She got into the driver's seat and drop Lucas off before going home. "Do you think that girl is dangerous?" Dustin asks her.

"I don't know, but something tells me she is in more danger than anything else?" She told him as they quietly went into their house, not wanting to wake their mother.

The next morning, Lyn had Lucas and Dustin in the back seat of Darling. They were going to pick up Mike and check on the girl. When she pulled up to the Wheeler's house Mike jump into the car. "I got El to talk to me. So I'm going to stay home to see what I can find out." He told them.

"Who's El?" Lucas asks.

"Eleven, the girl we found last night," Mike explains.

"Eleven like the number." Dustin narrows his eyes.

"Yeah like the number. It's a tattoo on her arm." He points to his forearm where the girl had the tattoo.

"What? How does a child get a tattoo?" She gasps.

"I don't know, but I'll find out more. I need you to drive around the block and drop me off down the street and I'll sneak back into my house. If my mom catches me I'll tell her I'm sick." He explains to us.

"Okay, I'll bring over chicken noodle soup after school. That will be our in." She nods her head. Nancy walks out of the house and tries to

walk past the car without talking to them. "Hey, Nancy," Lyn wave at her, knowing it would annoy the girl. Nancy throws a glare her way. When Lyn kept smiling and waving at her, Nancy rolls her eyes and storms away.

"She's dating a popular boy for like a week and now she's too good for us peasants." She glares at the other girl's back.

"She hates you, because Steve Harrington has a crush on you," Mike told her what he overheard his sister say to Barb on the phone. She pulled away from the curb and started rounding the block.

"Douche Bag Harrington has a crush on you." Dustin pretends to gag.

"He asks me out a couple of times but I always said no. Instead of being a bitch she should be grateful that I'm not taking her man because I could." She grumbled, annoyed with her prissy attitude. All the boys were pretending to gag now. "Okay gets out of my car, Wheeler." She parks down the street.

"I'll see you guys after school." He got out and walked to his house. She took off down the road.

"Do you think he's safe?" Dustin watches his friend until he disappears from view.

"He's risking it for a crush. It seems to be a genetic thing, Wheelers goes for stupid people." Lucas grumbled. Lyn let it slide since she knew he was being protective of his friend. The boys whisper back and forth to each other for the rest of the ride.

She parks in the high school parking lot. "I'll meet you guys at the car after school." The boys nod their heads before getting out of the car and making their way to the middle school.

She got out and walks into the school to see Jonathan putting up a flyer. She went over to him. "Oh what a cute picture," She smiles sadly at the lost flyer. "Did Hopper get back to you guys?"

"Yeah, he still thinks he's with Lonnie. We tried to tell him that even if he went there that bastard would send him right back." He glares at the paper in frustration as he finished pinning it up.

"Hey." The two teens look up to see Nancy Wheeler standing in front of us.

"Oh, hey," Jon said. He was just as surprised as Lyn that the girl was talking to him.

"I just I wanted to say, you know, um I'm sorry about everything." Nancy looks in between the flyer and Jon. He looks over her shoulder at Steve, Barb, Tommy, and Carol. They were staring at him. Steve and Carol look away while Tommy waves.

"Everyone's thinking about you." She said seeing where he was looking.

"I'm sure they have great things to say." Lyn walks over to the group. "Why don't you guys fuck off? A kid is missing and a family is worried sick, yet you're all staring like he's a freak show." She glares at the other teens.

"It's not like not." Steve shook his head, all of a sudden feeling ashamed.

"Save the fake prince charming act for the naive virgins, Harrington. No one believes any of your pretend sympathy. If you had any, you would have been at the woods last night helping us look for him." The bell rang stops her from tearing him apart completely. She pushes past them to go to class.

"I wanted to be there, my parents wouldn't let me!" Steve yells after her. Tommy and Carol laugh at their friend's hundred fail attempt with the Henderson girl. Barb glare at the boy who was obviously pining for someone else while going out with her best friend.

Lyn was leaning against Darling as she waited for Dustin and Lucas. She groans when she saw Steve Harrington approaching her. When he saw her glare, he put his hands in the air in surrender. "Look, I just wanted to say I'm sorry. I didn't know you cared about the kid."

"Oh my god, do you even think before you speak." She glares at the young man in front of her, who looks confused about what he said

wrong. "Will Byers is one of my brother's best friends. I've babysitters and hanging out with the kid a lot. But, even if I didn't know him I would care." She said now thinking about Eleven. "When someone is hurt, especially a kid, anyone who has an ounce of kindness in them would care. The fact that you only care when it bother someone you know is sickening." She wanted to spit on the teens' nice sneakers.

"You know most girls would find that flattering." He told her.

The two teens were so engrossed with the other they didn't notice the middle schoolers approaching them. "Yeah, well my sister isn't like most girls." Dustin opens the passenger door and got in the car.

"I'm pretty sure she's another species. I mean look at her brother." Lucas got into the back seat.

"Hey!" Dustin yells from the front seat. Lyn didn't spare the other teen another word or glance. She got into the car and drove off to a diner in town.

"Here, go inside and get the chicken noodle soup." She hands her brother some money.

"Come on Lucas." Dustin waves his arm for his friend to follow him. They went out of the car and went into the diner. She searched the radio station for a rock station, knowing that was Will's favorite.

The boys got back in the car. They notice the music change from pop but didn't say anything. She drove them to the Wheeler's house for the third time today. They got out and rang the doorbell. Mrs. Wheeler opens the door. "Hi, Mrs. Wheeler. When I was picking up Mike this morning he told me he was sick. So, I brought over some chicken noodle soup." She points at the bag Dustin was holding.

"That's so sweet of you. He's up in his room." She points up the stairs. They share a look wondering why he was in his room and not the basement.

They ran up to his room and found the door locked. "Hey, Mike." She knocks on the door.

"Come in." He opens the door enough for them to get in. They walk in

to find Eleven sitting on his bed.

"Are you out of your mind?" Lucas's jaw dropped. Dustin put the container of soup on the dresser.

"Just listen to me." Mike tried to reason.

"You are out of your mind!" Lucas answers his early question.

"She knows about Will," Mike said, making them look at the girl on the bed.

"What do you mean she knows about Will?" Dustin looks back at Mike.

"She pointed at him, at his picture. She knew he was missing. I could tell." Mike grabs the picture of them at the science fair.

"You could tell?" Lucas raises an eyebrow.

"Just think about it. Do you really think it was a coincidence that we found her on Mirkwood, the same place where Will disappeared?" Mike points out the connection they could have.

"That is weird." Dustin agreed.

"And she said bad people are after her." Lyn looks over at the girl, wondering if she was a kidnap victim. If she was, the kidnapper would be freaking out. They may kill Will and ditch his body somewhere in a panic or skip town with him.

"She told me that too. I think maybe these bad people are the same ones that took Will. I think she knows what happened to him." Mike told them.

"Then why doesn't she tell us?" Lucas snaps.

Lyn grabs the picture and sat down next to Eleven on the bed. "Honey, can you tell me how you know Will." She points at Will. She didn't say anything and stare at the picture.

"Do you know where he is? Do you know where Will is?" Lucas

screams at her, putting his hands on her shoulder roughly.

"Stop it, you're scaring her!" Mike screams at him. Lyn gently removes his hands from her.

"She should be scared! If you know where he is, tell us!" Lucas continues to try and scare the information out of her. When all he got was silence, he turned to Mike. "This is nuts. We have to take her to your mom"

"No! Eleven said telling an adult would put us in danger." Mike told us.

"What kind of danger?" Dustin asks. Mike ignored him to continue and argue with Lucas. "Mike what kind of danger?" He yells at his friend. Lyn was surprised that Mrs. Wheeler didn't come up here to check on them with all the noise.

"Danger, Danger." Mike made his hand to resemble a gun and put it up to Dustin's head and pull the pretend trigger. He tried to do the same to Lucas but his hand was smacked down.

"No, no, no! We're going back to plan A. We're telling your mom." Lucas shook his head. He walks over to the door, opening it for it to roughly close by some invisible force. Lucas tried again, but the door was forced to shut once again. They watch in horror as the door lock itself.

Lyn leans away from Eleven as she watched the girl staring intently at the door. Blood was dripping from her nose. "No," El said when the boys turn to look at her.

The group found themselves sitting around the Wheeler's dining table for dinner. Lyn was forcing the food down her throat even though she wasn't in the mood to eat. "Is something wrong with the meatloaf?" Mrs. Wheeler asks the boys who were pushing it around their plates.

"Oh, no, I had two bologna sandwiches for lunch. I don't know why." He smiles at the woman.

"Me too," Lucas gave her another smile. More like they finish the

large container of chicken noodle soup they brought for Mike.

"It's delicious, Mommy." Nancy smile, sweetly.

"Thank you, sweetie," Mrs. Wheeler smile back at her. The woman was desperate for any affection. It made Lyn wonder about Mr. Wheeler. He was married to a woman completely out of his league and yet he didn't treat her right. Between her dad, Lonnie and Mr. Wheeler, she wonders if any man was capable of treating a woman right. Then she remembered Mr. Sinclair, Lucas's dad, who treated his wife with respect and love.

"So, there's this special assembly thing tonight for Will at the school field. Barb's driving." Nancy told her mom. Lyn rolls her eyes, realizing she only complimented her mom to butter her up.

"Why am I just hearing about this?" She glances up at her daughter as she cut her meatloaf.

"I thought you knew." Nancy shrugs.

"I told you, I don't want you out after dark until Will is found." Her mom glared at her for asking when she already laid down a rule.

"I know, I know, but it'd be super weird if I'm not there. I mean, everyone's going." Nancy emphasizes the last part.

Mrs. Wheeler looks like she was thinking about what the town would say about them for not going. The fake caring made Lyn grip her fork tightly turning her knuckles white and digging her nails into her palm.

"Just be back by 10:00. Why don't you take the boys, too?" She points fork over at the boys.

"No!" The boys shouted.

"Don't you think you should be there, for Will?" She looks over at her son who was so angry with the lack of caring last night.

Behind Mrs. Wheeler's back, Eleven was walking down the stairs and heading to the basement. Mike ends up choking on the milk he was

drinking.

Dustin slams his fists down onto the table getting everyone to stare at him. "Sorry. Spasm." He apologizes.

"Oh, it's okay, Holly. It's just a loud noise." Mrs. Wheeler told her youngest, who was sinking in her chair while staring at Dustin.

"Nice." Nancy glared at him. He sunk down in his chair looking ashamed at having his crush mad at him.

"This assembly isn't for Will anyways. It's not like they're going to be looking for Will. They're just going to show a picture of him. It's more to scare other kids from playing in the woods. It's the school fake caring. People who really care would be with the police searching the woods for him. The assembly is the perfect place for you to be Nancy." Lyn sent a fake smile the other teen's way.

Nancy grits her teeth, not wanting to engage the other girl in an argument. Her mother might make her stay home for being rude to a guest. The rest of the dinner went quietly. After helping Mrs. Wheeler clean up, Nancy left and Lyn and the boys went to the basement.

"El? No adults. Just us and some meatloaf," Mike put a plate of meatloaf down in front of her. She stares at Lucas and Dustin, not knowing if she could trust them. "Don't worry. They won't tell anyone about you. They promise, right?" He turns around to get his friends to assure her.

"We never would've upset you if we knew you had superpowers," Dustin said, earning him a punch in the leg from Mike. He yells out in pain.

"What Dustin is trying to say is that they were just scared earlier. That's all." Mike turned back to her.

"We just wanted to find our friend," Lucas told her.

"Friend?" She narrowed her eyes at the boy for using any unknown word.

"Yeah, friend. Will?" Lucas said, not knowing who else she could

think he was talking about.

"What is a friend?" She asks.

"Is she serious?" Lucas looks around at them.

"Um, a friend is..." Lyn tried to think of the meaning.

"Is someone that you'd do anything for," Mike finish for her.

"You lend them your cool stuff, like comic books and trading cards." Dustin lists the fun things they do together.

"And they never break a promise," Mike told her.

"Especially when there's spit," Lucas said. Lyn cringe, remembering the few times they made her do that.

"Spit?" Eleven wonders what the bodily fluid had to do with anything.

"A spit swear means..." Lucas spits in his hand to shake it with Dustin's. "...you never break your word. It's a bond." Dustin looks between his hand and Lucas in disgust before wiping his hand on his shirt.

"That's super important because friends tell each other things. Things parents don't know." Mike explains to her. El looks them all over as she processed the new information.

She got up and walked over to the table that had the dungeons and dragons board set up on it. She put her hands face down on the table and closed her eyes. "What's the weirdo doing?" Lucas said as he slowly trails behind her like the rest of them.

"El? Honey, are you alright." Lyn sat down on a chair beside her.

She opens her eyes and picks up the piece that looks like a wizard. "Will."

"Superpowers," Dustin's eyes went wide for that was the piece that Will always played as. Lucas rolls his eyes, determined not to be

impressed by her.

"Did you see him? On Mirkwood? Do you know where he is?" Mike took a seat on the other side of her. Eleven put two pieces on the side before swiping the rest of the pieces off the table and flipping the board over before putting Will in the middle of it. "I don't understand." He shook his head.

"Hiding," She answered.

"Will is hiding?" Mike asks for clarifications.

She nods her head.

"From the bad men?" Lyn asks, fearing the worst for the boy.

El shook her head no.

"Then from who?" Mike asks.

El put down the monster piece, the Demogorgon. Everyone shares a look of horror.

3. Holly Jolly

Lyn found herself in the Wheeler's basement again. "You sure, you don't want to wait until tomorrow. I have the day off." She asks the boys. She had to work after school and the boys wanted to search the woods with El.

"You're the one always saying time is of the essence whenever mom questions you about going out to look for Will." Dustin points out to her.

"Don't worry Lyn, we are prepared," Mike assured her.

"Tell me about the plan." She demands.

"We tell our parents we have AV Club after school. That'll give us at least a few hours for Operation Mirkwood." Mike explains how they were going to get around their parents, but nothing else. Lyn narrows her eyes at him.

"You seriously think that the weirdo knows where Will is?" Lucas leans into whispers to them. Eleven was sitting on the couch behind them. They were going to use her powers to try and track Will.

"Just trust me on this, okay?" Mike stared into Lucas's eyes. He nods, saying that they would give it a try. They didn't have anything to lose at this point. "Did you get the supplies?" Mike asked him. Lyn stood up straight wanting to see what kind of weapons they had to defend themselves.

"Yeah: Binoculars from 'Nam, army knife also from 'Nam, hammer, camouflage bandana, and the wrist rocket." Lucas pulls them out of his backpack as he names them. He was clearly the most excited about the last one.

"You're going to take out the Demogorgon with a slingshot?" Dustin asks.

"First of all, it's a wrist rocket. And second of all, the Demogorgon's not real. It's made up. But if there is something out there, I'm going to

shoot it in the eye - and blind it." He pulls back the slingshot and let it go making Dustin jump despite the fact that nothing was in it.

"Dustin, what did you get?" Mike asked his friend to put a stop to their argument before it started.

"Well, alrighty. So, we've got Nutty Bars, Bazooka, Pez, Smarties, Pringles, Nilla Wafers, apple, banana, and trail mix." Dustin dumps his backpack on the table. His friends put their eyebrows up in confusion. Lyn bites her lip to stop from laughing. She told him to take his old hockey stick instead of the junk food, but he told her it wouldn't fit in his backpack and it would do nothing against a Demogorgon. She would have given him the crowbar, but that was kind of heavy for him to be carrying around all day.

Mike and Lucas share a look that said can you believe this guy before Lucas said it for them, "Seriously?"

"We need energy for our travels, for stamina. And besides, why do we even need weapons anyway? We have her." Dustin points to Eleven. He hadn't shut up about how amazing it was to know a superhero on the ride there this morning.

"She shut one door." Lucas pointed out that they didn't know how powerful she is.

"With her mind! Are you kidding me? That's insane! Imagine all the other cool stuff she could do. Like I bet that she could make this fly!" Dustin grabs Mike's toy millennium falcon and stood in front of Eleven. "Hey. Okay, concentrate. Okay?" He drops it and hit the floor. "Okay, one more time. Okay. Use your powers, okay?" He looks hopefully at El as he drops it on the floor again.

"Idiot," Lucas and Lyn mutter under their breath.

"She's not a dog!" Mike scolds him as he grabs his toy off the floor before Dustin ends up breaking it.

"Boys! Lyn! Time for school!" Mrs. Wheeler yells down the stairs.

"Just stay down here. Don't make any noise, and don't leave. If you get hungry, eat Dustin's snacks, okay?" Mike kneels in front of El to

explain. Mrs. Wheeler yells her son's name again. "Coming!" Mike yells up harshly to his mom before turning back to speak nicely to El. "You know those power lines?"

"Power lines?" El asks. Lyn was thinking of a way to explain power lines. She never realized how hard everyday things were to explain.

"The ones behind my house," Mike told her which power lines he was talking about.

"Yes." El nods making Lyn stare at her in confusion. How did she know what power lines were but not friends?

"Meet us there, after school." Mike gave her instructions.

"After school?" She asks, never having been to school.

"Yeah, 3:15," Mike told her.

"There no clock down here for her," Lyn told the boy. The girl would have no way of knowing when it was 3:15.

Mike took off his watch and put it on her wrist. "When the numbers read three-one-five meet us there," He told her. They repeat it to each other. El smile at him to let him know she got it.

Mike grabbed his bag off the table, and they went upstairs. The boys rode their bikes to school while Lyn drove.

Lyn looks down in disgust at her lunch plate as she made her way to the bookworm's table. It was a group of students who prefer solitude over socializing like her. They sat together at lunch and read their books. "Hey, Rosalyn," Nancy call out her name as she passed the table.

"Yes." She put the tray down on the table but didn't take a seat.

"Was Barbara in biology, today? I know she's your lab partner." Nancy bites her bottom lip. Barbara was in Lyn's junior biology class despite being a sophomore.

"No, what happened did she fall into Harrington's swimming pool at the 'assembly' you attend last night and caught a cold," Lyn smirks as she put air quotes around the word assembly. Tommy and Carol giggle like idiots while Steve stares at her wondering when the last time she called him by his first name was.

Nancy shot Steve a glare, not liking that Lyn seems to know what happened last night. If a girl who didn't even participate in gossip knew then everyone knew. "No, no one even saw her leave the house." She turns back to the girl standing by the table.

"Two horny teen couples didn't take notice of their surroundings." Lyn's words dripping with sarcasm. "She probably got tired of waiting and went home." She rolls her eyes.

"And she not here now, because?" Nancy asks her, wanting someone to take it seriously.

"Because she's probable skipping," Steve told her.

"Yeah, you're right." She mutters but didn't look convinced. She stared out the door. Lyn looks over to see Jonathan standing there. He broke eye contact with Nancy and hurry along before anyone else could notice him.

"Look, Nancy, go to her house after school. If she isn't there, then go to the police with her parents and you lie. You say she's been missing for a full 24 hours or they'll dick you around like they did Ms. Byers." She explains to the worried teen. Nancy's eyes light up that someone seems to actually have a plan on what to do with Barbara missing.

Lyn picks up her tray and went over to her table to sit down. She pulls out *Stephen King's Fire Starter* from her backpack.

Lyn sprints out of the school. Her history teacher kept her late and now she was going to be late for work. "Sorry." She yelled back at the classmates she pushes aside.

She was running through the parking when she tripped. "Fuck." She curses as she got up. She looks back to see Jonathan holding a broken

camera. "Oh my god, I'm so sorry Jonathan. I'll buy you a new one." She apologizes as she helps him pick up the broken pieces.

"This wasn't you, it was Harrington." He spat out the name.

"What? Why would he do this?" She looks around and took notice of the ripped up photos on the ground.

"Honestly, I can't blame him. If I was in his shoes I would have done the same. When I was looking for Will last night in the woods, I found myself in his backyard. They were having a party. I don't know why I took those pictures." He rambles.

Lyn picks up a piece of a photo. It was Nancy taking her shirt off with her back to the window. "I can see now why he would be mad." She shows him the picture before ripping it up. "Neither her or you want that getting around."

She stood up after helping Jonathan shove everything into his bag. He opened his mouth to further explain himself, but she put her hand up to stop him. "We have only had a brief conversation while waiting for our brothers at the arcade, but you don't seem like a peeping tom. Everyone makes stupid mistakes. Now I would really love to stay and console you some more but I'm late to work." She waved to him before running off to her car. She speeds to the vet clinic.

She pulled in, parks her car, and ran inside. "Sorry for being late." She apologizes as she ran into the bathroom to change into her scrubs.

"I don't care if you're late but that better not have been you I heard speeding down the road." Janise, the office clerk, pound on the bathroom door.

"It wasn't me." She threw her school clothes into her bag.

"You damn liar." The clerk hit the door one more time before walking away.

Lyn walks out and went into the boarding area to see all the dogs and cats in their cages. "Hey, guys." She smiles at the animals. The room echo with excited and aggressive barks.

"Hey Spikey," She bent down to greet the Shih Tzu that was boarding here while his owners were on vacation. She opens the cage to hook a leash onto his collar. She led him out of the clinic and walks him around the block. She smiles down at Spikey. His nose stays on the ground and his tail constantly wagging. She was going to miss him when his owners came back next week.

She loved her job. The good days outweigh the bad by a lot. She got to play with all types of animals. There was nothing more gratifying than watching one raise back to health.

But, there were cons too like cleaning the kennels. The smell of urine, feces, and vomit was something that took a long time to get used to. The hardest was blood, not physically but mentally. She wanted to cry when she had to clean up a lot of it. She always cried when a pet passed away.

She remembers the first time it happened, she told her boss she didn't know if she was right for this job. Her boss told her the day she didn't feel anything when a pet dies is the day she wouldn't be right for this job.

Her boss, Dr. Penelope Myung was someone that Rosalyn deeply admired. She was a second-generation Korean immigrant. She was a woman ahead of her time. She works while her husband stayed home and took care of the kids. He was a nice man who never let his wife being the breadwinner ruin his pride of 'being a man' like most would.

Dr. Myung was education, kind, and funny. She was able to keep it together no matter how chaotic things got at the clinic. She was able to handle the most ridiculous patients with kindness. This is how Lyn meets her in the first place. Her mom brought Mews to the clinic when she said she heard the cat cough. Even though the vet told her nothing was wrong, she made them run every test they could. It ran up a high bill.

When Lyn found out she cried all night long. The next day she went to the clinic to see if she could work out a payment plan. Penelope took one look at the worn-out teen that was crying and gave her job. She told her she could work it off. If she was good, then she would

keep her on.

It has been two years of working there, Lyn loved it so much. The only time she took a vacation was during the summer when Penelope made her take two weeks off.

"Come on Spikey. It's time to go back." She pulled the small dog toward the building when it came back into their view. She cleans his cage and then put him back.

She took the next dog out and continues the routine until everyone got a walk. She had dinner with Janise, Penelope, and a few vet techs. Then she gave the animals their medication and dinner.

By the time she got home, it was dark. She went inside to be greeted by the smell of chocolate cake putting a smile on her face. "What the occasion?" She yelled as she hurried to the kitchen.

Her smile drops when she saw her brother sobbing at the table. "What's wrong?" She runs over to hug him.

"On the way home from AV club, cops cars and fire trucks flew past the boys and they follow them. The poor things saw them dragging Will's body for the lake." Her mom informed her.

That night they cried and ate the whole cake together. Lyn was so sure they would find Will alive. He would be scar mentally and maybe physically, but they would help him get better. She was wrong and it felt terrible. Now, she would do anything, she would even kiss Tommy just to see Will's shy little smile one last time.

4. The Body

Lyn was sitting in her brother's room. Dustin was giving her a play by play of what happened last night. There were a few times she had to get him back on the subject because he would sidetrack. She interpreted him when he told her that El led them to Will's house and said that he was there. "It doesn't make sense. How did she know where Will lived?" Lyn rubs her temples.

"What about her makes sense? She can move things with her mind." He shrugs, wiping the tears from his eyes.

"I don't know, I keep thinking about how she flipped the board upside down. It has to mean something." She confessed to him. She couldn't get it out of her mind. She felt like it was the missing piece to the puzzle that she couldn't figure out.

"Dustin, Dustin, you there." Lucas's voice came over the walkie.

"I'm here." He grabs the walkie.

"Mike just contacted me. He said to come over that he has information that Will still alive." Lucas explains to them.

"What? Alive?" Dustin's eyes filled with hope despite seeing his body being pulled from the lake.

"That what he said. He also said to have Lyn bring her make-up and a wig." He told them.

"We'll be there." Lyn grabs the walkie from her brother.

"The wig must be for El. I think she would look good as a blonde. Get ready." She orders as she left her brother's room.

Roselyn walks into her room. Although she slept there every night, she felt like it had been days since she was in there. She took a moment to look around and remember how much work she put it to make it hers. She never let a thing like not having enough money stops her from getting what she wanted. She either saved up or got creative. She likes being fashionable, but she couldn't afford those

prices so, she learns how to knit and sew. She would buy clothes from garage sales and cheap stores turn them into the new trend.

In the corner, there was a furry bean bag chair next to it a basket full of yarn that Meows like to take naps in. There were two antique armoires that she got from garage sales on opposite sides of the room. One was painted white and she converted into a sewing station with a cushioned stool in front of it. There were two sewing mannequins on either side of it that she also bought at a garage sale. Another was painted purple and she converted into a vanity desk that had a furry stool that could be slide underneath it. She put chalkboards on the insides of the doors, where her mother and brother like to write messages for her on. She also uses the vanity as a desk to do her homework.

There was a decent-sized closet that she put shelves and a rod in, to make more storage space for all the clothes she got over the years. Her favorite part of the room was the queen size bed that cost a month's wage but it was worth it. She had plenty of pillows on it with a large gray blanket that she knitted.

She shook her head to get herself out of her nostalgia state and remind herself that she was on a mission. She grabs her backpack and dumps the school supplies out of it. She loads it up with her make-up and a blonde wig she used last Halloween when she was Alice in Wonderland. She changed into a pair of acid wash jeans and a Madonna T-shirt. She did her makeup light and grab a scrunchie to put her hair up in a high ponytail.

She walks out of her room to see Dustin waiting outside her door. Without saying a word they walk to the car. They pick up Lucas on the way to the Wheeler's house. Dustin knocks on the door and Mike opens it. He led them down to the basement where they sat in a circle by El's fort.

"Show them El." Mike point to the walkie talkie in her hand. She looks down at the walkie and muffled whining mixed with static interference came over the walkie. The group sat there for a few minutes listening to it.

"We keep losing the signal, but you heard it, right?" Mike looks at

them with newfound energy to find Will. While the rest of them wanted to believe it, it wasn't much to grasp on to.

"Yeah, I heard a baby." Lucas looks frustrated. Despite all the imagination Lucas had when it came to playing dungeons and dragons, when it came to real life he was a skeptic.

"What?" Mike look at him shocked.

"Mike, you obviously tapped into a baby monitor. It's probably the Blackburns' next door." He tried to reason with his friend.

"Did that sound like a baby to you? That was Will!" Mike argues.

"Mike," Lyn spoke his name. Denial was a painful thing to see anyone in.

"You don't understand. He spoke last night. Words! He was singing that weird song he loves. Even El heard him!" Mike look to El to back him up, but she didn't look up from the radio.

"Oh, well, if the weirdo heard him, then I guess" Lucas rolls his eyes sarcastically.

"Are you sure you're on the right channel?" Dustin asks. He was open to the possibility that Will was out there, but he needs more than what Mike was giving him at the moment.

"I don't think it's about that. I think, somehow, she's channeling him." He explains. Somehow that made sense to Lyn. It wasn't like Will had his walkie on him. If so he would have contacted them a long time ago.

"Like Professor X." Dustin looks excited by El's superpowers once again.

"Yeah," Mike was excited that one of his friends was getting it.

"Do you actually believe this crap?" Lucas glares at Dustin for encouraging Mike's wild ideas.

"I don't know, I mean... do you remember when Will fell off his bike

and broke his finger? He sounded a lot like that." Dustin thought back to the time. It was scary at the moment, but they were able to joke about it now.

Lyn remembers how she stayed calm and focuses on the way to the hospital, but after she called Joyce from the hospital she cried like a baby. She felt so bad, Joyce trusted her to keep her son safe and she failed her. She thought the mom wouldn't let her son see her again.

"If there's a possibility I'm not going to ignore it." She told Lucas when he turns to her.

"Did you guys not see what I saw? They pulled Will's body out of the water. He's dead! " Lucas yells at them.

"Well, maybe it's his ghost. Maybe he's haunting us." Dustin said.

"That makes me sad to think of Will's spirit wandering the earth. If he's dead, I want him to rest in peace." Lyn's heartfelt like breaking at the thought. Will went through enough pain in life with the bullies and an absent dad. He didn't need to suffer in the afterlife too.

"It's not his ghost." Mike shook his head.

"So how do you know that?" Lucas turns to glare at Mike. He was already frustrated with Mike for making it harder to mourn Will. It pushes him over the edge for him to dismiss Dustin's supernatural idea when they were all supposed to believe his blindly.

"I just do!" Mike glared at Lucas. Even Lyn was started to get upset with Mike. She wanted to believe Will was alive too, but at this point, it felt like they were hurting themselves more than anything else.

"Then what was in that water?" Lyn asked softly. She wasn't there to see it, but Dustin said it looked exactly like Will.

"I don't know! All I know is Will is alive. Will is alive! He's out there somewhere. All we have to do is find him." Mike told them with confidence that the rest of the group wish they felt. They fell into silence, all of them frustrated and sad. They turn to El when they heard the static come from the radio again. "This isn't going to work. We need to get El to a stronger radio." Mike shook his head as he

watches El try her hardest.

"Mr. Clarke's Heathkit ham shack," Dustin smiles brightly for having the idea. Mike smiled back at him nodding his head.

"The Heathkit's at school. There is no way we're going to get the weirdo in there without anyone noticing. I mean look at her." Lucas points at her. He had a point a young girl with a shaved head isn't something people saw every day.

"That where I came in. Come on doll, I'm going to make you look fantabulous." Lyn stood up and held her hand out to the girl. She took her hand without hesitation this time. The older girl helps the younger one to her feet and led her over to the couch.

"You guys go look for something of Nancy she can wear." She told the boys. They went upstairs to look for something.

Lyn set up her makeup on the table beside them with El watching her with interest. She rubs some blush on a makeup brush; she went to put it on El's face. The girl leans away from her. "It's okay, it's this." She points to her own cheek that had blush on it. El leans forwards so she was closer to Lyn. After the blush, she put on lipstick, eye shadow, and mascara. Lyn went with all light natural colors, not wanting to go over the top on such a young girl.

There was a knock on the door. Lyn got up to open it. "Here you go." Dustin passes her a pink dress that had a white-collar.

"Thank you. I'll do the big reveal in a few minutes." She shut the door in her brother's face. "Here the dress. You can change in here. I'll turn away and you tell me when you need zipping up." Lyn turns around. She looks around the room wondering if she should remodel her basement.

"I need zipping," El told her. She turns around and zips up the pink dress.

"Okay, now it's wig time." Lyn pulls the wig out of her bag.

"Is that hair?" El tilts her head.

"Fake hair, people aren't used to seeing a bald girl. We need you to blend in for the next mission." She put the wig on El. She grabs a comb to fix the wig that got messed up in the bag. "I always wanted a younger sister. I imagine us playing dress up and talk about boys. I would teach her to be independent, so when she got with a man it would be because she wants him, not that she needs him." Lyn confessed to El. She was the first person she ever told that too.

"I could be your little sister." El whispers.

"I think you're already on your way there." The two girls share a big smile. "Ready to show the guys," She asks.

El took a deep breath before walking to the door. She opens it and slowly walks out making the boys jaws drops. Rosalyn smile in the back like a proud mama. "Wow. She looks..." Dustin was the first to recover.

"Pretty." Mike stares at her in the way that every girl dreams about being stared at. Dustin, Lucas, and Lyn look amused by their friend. "Good. You look pretty good." He tried to cover up making Lucas narrowed his eyes at his friend's failed attempt.

" Pretty. Good." El walks over to a mirror to repeat herself.

"You look more than pretty good. You look beautiful whether it be in Mike's sweats or Nancy's dress." Lyn moves behind her to smile at her through the mirror.

"Let get her to the strongest radio in Hawkins," Dustin said to them but kept his goofy smile on Mike.

They got into Darling and Lyn drove to the middle school. The boys lead El and Lyn in through the back entrance. "Okay, remember, if anyone sees us look sad." Mike reminds them that everyone else thought Will was dead.

"Attention students, there will be an assembly to honor Will Byers in the gymnasium now. Do not go to your fourth period." The principle's voice came over the intercom.

Mike tried to open the Audio Visual Room, but it wouldn't move. "It's

locked." He sighs.

"What?" Lucas tried to open it.

"Hey, do you think you can open it with your powers?" Dustin asks El. He was excited to see her in action again.

"Boys?" Mr. Clarke, the boy's science teacher came around the corner. They jump in fright. Lucas slams himself against the door.

"Hey," Dustin said weakly.

"Assembly's about to start," The teacher told them.

"We know. We're just, you know..." Mike looks down at his feet, pretending to be sad.

"Upset." Lucas finishes for him.

"Yeah, definitely upset." Dustin nods his head in agreement.

"We need some alone time." Mike look about to tear up. Out of all the boys, he seems to be the best actor.

"To cry," Dustin told him, hoping the man would leave them alone out of pity.

"Yeah, listen I get it. I do. I know how hard this is, but let's just be there for Will, huh? And then, the Heathkit is all yours for the rest of the day. What do you say?" He throws the keys. The boys smile down at the key in Mike's hand.

"Hey Rosalyn, you here to support the boys," Mr. Clarke turns to her.

"Call me over protector, but I couldn't leave them yet." She reached out and hugged Dustin to her. He struggles to get out of her hold.

"I understood." He nods to her with sympathy. "I don't believe we've met. What's your name?" He notices El standing there.

"Eleven." She whispers.

"Eleanor! She's my, uh" Mike yell over her.

"Cousin," Lucas helps him out again.

"Second cousin," Dustin thought the little details would make it more believable.

"She comes every summer to visit. She's here for Will's funeral." Lyn explains her presence there.

"Ah, well, welcome to Hawkins Middle, Eleanor. I wish you were here under better circumstances." Mr. Clarke smiles softly at the girl.

She looks them over before turning back to Mr. Clarke. "Thank you."

"Uh, where are you from exactly?" He asks her out of curiosity. He never heard the boys mention a cousin before.

"Bad place." She answers honestly making them tense up.

"Sweden!" Dustin corrected her.

"I have a lot of Swedish family," Mike told him.

"She hates it there. She misses us." Lyn nod along with the boy's background story.

"Cold!" Lucas gave the reason before the teacher could ask.

"Subzero," Dustin points at the man.

He nods his head, buying their story. "Shall we?" The man points toward the gym. They follow him to the assembly.

"At times like these, it is important that we come together as a community." The Principle was saying when Dustin throws the doors again. The doors slam loudly against the walls causing the Principle to stop speaking and everyone to look at us.

"Abort." Dustin tried to turn around but Lucas and Lyn stop him. They walk over to sit in the stands.

"We come together to heal we come together to grieve." The Principle continued his speech.

"Will Byers' death is an unimaginable tragedy. Will was an exceptional student and a wonderful friend to all of us. It's impossible to express the hole his loss will leave in our community. I'd like to introduce you to Sandy Sloane. She's a local grief counselor from the church over in Jonesboro. But before she comes up here, I just want those of you who are having trouble dealing with this tragic loss..." Lyn zone him out when she heard Lucas and Mike talking.

"Look at these fakers." Mike glare at their classmates, while none were crying a lot of them look sad.

"They probably didn't even know his name till today." Lucas agrees, glaring at his classmate too.

Lyn turn her head when she heard snicker to see Troy and James. They were two punks who got their rocks off by bullying her ducklings. She wasn't ashamed to admit she kicks both their asses, even though they were five years younger than her. But, they were always brave when she wasn't around or when they were in a public place. She glares holes into them as they mock the Principle.

"Mouth breather," El hisses, making Lyn realized that everyone in the group heard them.

The bell rang making everyone get up to leave the gym.

"Hey! Hey! Hey, Troy! Hey, Troy! You, you think this is funny?" Mike made his way through the crowd to yell at the boy. The group was fast on his tail to back him up.

"What'd you say, Wheeler?" Troy got in his face like he was some tough guy.

"I saw you guys laughing over there. And I think that's a really messed up thing to do." He didn't back down from the bully. He was drawing a crowd in the process.

"Didn't you listen to the counselor, Wheeler? Grief shows itself in funny ways." James smirks at the boy.

"Besides, what's there to be sad about, anyway? Will's in fairyland now, right? He's flying around with all the other little fairies, all

happy and gay!" Troy made like he was a fairy, flopping his arms around. James and he walked away laughing.

Lyn swells up with pride for the second time today when Mike ran up and pushes him down on the ground. She would have been happier if he did it when Troy was facing him. But, he was standing up for himself none the less. The crowd let out an 'oh' as they watch the bully fall.

"You're dead, Wheeler! Dead!" Troy started to run at Mike when he froze mid-run. The look of confusion on his face made Lyn turns to El to see the same intense look on her face that she had when she slammed the door and stare down at the walkie.

"Dude, Troy peed himself." A random kid yells making the crowd broke out in laughter.

"Holy shit!" Dustin laughs. Mike turned to look at El. She wipes her nose that was dripping blood and walks away.

"Hey! What's going on here?" The Principal yells, making everyone scatter. Lucas grabs Mike and they ran out of the gym.

They went back to the Audio Visual Room. Mike unlocks it and locks it again once they were inside. El next down on the table as the boys turn the machine on. "Now what?" Dustin looks at Mike.

"She'll find him. Right, El?" Mike turns the control knob. El closes her eyes making the radio switch channels. "She's finding him!" He told them.

"This is crazy." Dustin gasps.

"Calm down. She just closed her eyes." Lucas rolls his eyes.

"Holy shit!" Lyn screams as the lights went out. There was a banging noise coming from the radio. Tears came down her face when Will's voice came through. He was crying out for his mom. He sounds so scared and helpless.

"Will! Will! Can you hear us!" Lucas and Dustin started screaming out to him.

"Shut up! He can't hear you. Just listen to what he's saying." Lyn shouted. She didn't know how long El could keep the connection. She wanted to hear if Will would give any hints to where he is. "Mom, it is coming! It's like home, but it's so dark. It is so dark and empty. And it's cold! Mom? Mom! Mom, please!" Will screams out. The radio short circuit and burst into flames making them jump back. Dustin grabs the fire extinguisher and put it out.

"El, you okay?" Mike turns her chair, so they could get a better look at her. Her nose was dripping blood. "Can you move?" He asks her. When she didn't respond, the group shares a look of panic. "Help her up." Mike grabs one of her arms while Lucas grabs the other. Dustin and Lyn grab all their things. They put her in a wheelchair and rush her out of the school.

Lyn picked up El bridal style to get her into the car. The boy pushes the wheelchair to the side before getting into the car themselves.

"What do we do now?" Dustin asks as his sister pulls out of the parking lot.

"We make sure El is okay and then we get Will back." Lyn stares at the road, but her mind was somewhere else.

5. The Flea and the Acrobat

Lyn was sitting on the couch in the Wheeler's basement with Eleven's head in her lap. She held an ice pack to the younger girl's forehead, hoping it would help her cool down.

"What was Will saying? Like home but dark?" Mike got up from the couch to pace.

"And empty," Lucas recalls Will saying that.

"Empty and cold. Wait, did he say cold?" Dustin looks to his friend to see if he was remembering right.

"I don't know. The stupid radio kept going in and out." Lucas curses the radio under his breath.

"It's like riddles in the dark." Dustin sighs.

"Like home. Like his house?" Mike continues to pace in front of them.

"Or maybe like Hawkins." Lucas points to Mike like he was onto something.

"Upside down," El whispers.

"What'd she say?" Lucas asks the boys like he couldn't ask her.

"She said upside down." Lyn glared at Lucas. He didn't have to treat the girl like she was a freak.

"What?" Lucas narrows his eyes like she was speaking a different language.

"Upside down. When El showed us where Will was, she flipped the board over, remember? Upside down: Dark, Empty." Mike sat down at the table to flip the board over like she did. The boys join him at the table.

"Do you understand what he's talking about?" Lucas turns to Dustin.

"No, but Lyn was saying something like that this morning." He told them. They glance over at the teenager that was focused on the younger girl.

"Guys, come on, think about it. When El took us to find Will, she took us to his house, right?" Mike hope his friends would see things his way.

"Yeah, and he wasn't there." Lucas reminds him.

"But what if he was there? What if we just couldn't see him? What if he was on the other side? What if this is Hawkins..." Mike flips the board over to show the side that had the game on it to represent Hawkins. "...and this is where Will is? The Upside Down" He flips it over to the blank side to represent the upside down.

"Like the Vale of Shadows." Dustin got up to grab their Dungeons and Dragon binder. Lyn slides out from under a sleeping El and sat at the table with the boys.

"What's going on?" She asks them.

"We think we figure out what the meaning of upside down," Mike told her.

Dustin flips through the binder, stopping on a page and read it out loud. "The Vale of Shadows is a dimension that is a dark reflection or echo of our world. It is a place of decay and death, a plane out of phase, a place of monsters. It is right next to you, and you don't even see it. It's an alternate dimension."

"But how do we get there?" Mike ponders the next hurdle in their way.

"You cast Shadow Walk." Dustin beams that he seems to be solving the puzzle.

"In real life, dummy," Lucas glares at his friend.

"We can't shadow walk, but maybe she can." Dustin nods his head to El. She was awake from her short nap and staring at them.

"Do you know how we can get there? To the Upside Down?" Mike asks. El didn't react at all. She gave them a blank stare. They collectively let out of frustrated sigh. As patient as Rosalyn was trying to be, this was getting unbearable. She could at least tell them if they were on the right track or not.

"We'll figure it out, with or without El's help." She pulled the binder from Dustin to read every article on the Valley of Shadows.

Lyn was standing behind the boys at Will's funeral with a yellow rose in her hand. While the body in the coffin looked identical to Will, it didn't move Lyn to feel anything like Will's real dead body would. The priest was talking not that any of his words were registering with her. Her mind was running a mile a minute on how they could get to the Valley of Shadows. She did some research, but everything seemed impossible.

"Just wait till we tell Will that Jennifer Hayes was crying at his funeral." Dustin cheers, making Lucas and Mike smile. Mrs. Wheeler shh him while Lyn slaps him in the back of the head.

"Frown and stare at the floor. You're supposed to be sad." Lyn whispers in his ear.

After the priest stops talking, the casket was lowered into the ground. Everyone form a line and drop their rose on top of the casket. In the Henderson family, Dustin went first, followed by Lyn, their mom, and their dad who fly in to come to the funeral. His son was happy to have him there. His daughter was on the fence about it, she wanted to resent him but she enjoys the man company. Lyn was sure she could stay mad at him for this weekend visit, but all it took was him pulling her out to the garage. She was like a kid again, passing him tools as he changes the oil and tune-up Darling. They exchanged stories about their lives.

"Come on dear, we have to give our condolences." Her dad puts his hand on her back and guides her over to Will's parents.

When Lyn saw Joyce's face she couldn't help but cry out of guilt, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Byers. I should have been there that night to pick him up."

She wanted to add on whether he's dead or not she should have been there. But, she kept that to herself. When they get Will back, they'll explain everything to her. There was no need for hope when it could be false.

"Oh babe, it's not your fault." Lonnie was quick to pull the teen into a hug. He put his hand on her upper back to push her chest into his. She tenses up in his arms as he rubs her back and whispers soothing words into her ear. To say that Lonnie Byers gave her the creeps would be an understatement. The few time she saw the man, he commented on her growing body. The sly guy seems to always find a way to touch her that seems innocent. It felt anything but innocent to her.

Dustin grabs his sister's arm and pulls her out of the man's hold. "I'm sorry for your loss. We'll see you at the wake." He waved to his friend's parents as he dragged his sister away. Their mom and dad follow them to the car.

"Dustin that was very rude." His mom scolds him when they were all in the car.

"He was holding her for longer than appropriate." He defends his actions.

"The man is in mourning." Mrs. Henderson hiss at him.

"He hardly ever came to see his son," Dustin yells back. The car went silent as the three Hawkins residents eye the driver seat where Mr. Henderson was sitting.

The man clears his throat and backs the car out of the parking space. They sat in awkward silence on the short ride to the wake that was being held in the building across the street from the cemetery. Lyn and Dustin jump out of the van as soon as it stopped to hurry inside. "I shouldn't have said that." He scolds himself.

"Hey, you didn't say anything that wasn't true. If he took those words personally then he should visit more." She hugged her brother. He hugs her back, thankfully for her.

"Get off me the guys are coming." He pushed her off when he saw the Wheeler and the Sinclair families come in. The boys made eye contact and were quick to make their way to each other.

"It's good that they have each other." Lyn jumps and turns around not wanting her back to be to Lonnie. She scolds herself for not watching the door. "Do you have anyone to go to for comfort?" He trails his fingers along her arm.

"Dustin and I have each other." She took a step back to be out of arms reach.

"A child can't relate to you as an adult can." He took two steps forward, so they were closer than they were before.

"Hey Lonnie, I haven't seen you in a long time. What have you been up to?" A man came up to slap him on the back.

Lyn took this opportunity to walk away. She went over to the boys who were on the other side of the room. "Lyn, we need you to ask Mr. Clarke the questions about the upside down." Dustin turns to her as soon as she reaches the group.

"Why do I have to ask him, he's your teacher?" She leans down to whisper to him.

"If we ask him, he'll think we're going to try something crazy. If you ask him, he'll think a pretty girl talking to him and not care." Lucas points a finger at them and then her.

"I just escape an older man, now you want him to throw myself at another one." She glares at them for treating her like the Daphne Blake of the group.

"Ew, no, don't throw yourself at him. No one wants to see that. Just talk to him." Dustin grimace.

Lyn rolled her eyes as she walked over to Mr. Clarke at the refreshment table. The boys were on her heels. "Mr. Clarke?" She tapped his shoulder.

"Oh hey," He smiled brightly at her before remembering where he

was. He dropped his smile and look over at the boys behind her. "Hey guys, how are you holding up?"

"We're in mourning," Lucas said robotically.

Dustin shoves a cookie in his mouth. "Man, these aren't real Nilla Wafers." He groans. His friends glare at him while his teacher looks confused.

"I was wondering if we could talk. I have a few science questions." Lyn spoke to bring the man's attention back to her.

"I'm always up for talking about science with curious minds." He nods. The boys were quick to lead them over to an empty table.

"What's on your curious young mind?" He turned to her. She wishes that Lucas has not implied that the science teacher thought she was pretty, now she couldn't help but notice his eyes travel along her body.

Dustin nudges her, making her jump. "It kind of embarrassing but I can't get it out of my mind. Did you watch Carl Sagan's Cosmos?" She asks him.

He nodded his head. "Sure I have, it quite fascinating."

"Yes, it is. I can't stop thinking about how he speaks about other dimensions. The thought of something being beyond our world is quite exciting to me." She smiles coyly as she stares at him from under her lashes. The kick her brother gave her let her know she was laying it on too thick.

"It's all theoretically." Mr. Clarke shallows the lump in his throat as he loosens his tie.

"Right, theoretically." She bit her lip, wondering how to get out of this awkward space she put them in.

"So, theoretically, how do we travel there?" Lucas took over the questioning.

"You guys have been thinking about Hugh Everett's Many-Worlds

Interpretation, haven't you?" He looks them over.

The boys share a look of confusion having never heard of it before.
"Yes, we have." Lyn beam at the man.

He blushes and clears his throat before speaking, "Well, basically, there are parallel universes. Just like our world, but just infinite variations of it, which means there's a world out there where none of this tragic stuff ever happened."

"Yeah, that's not what we're talking about." Lucas shook his head.

"Oh." The teacher looks bum. He thought he was really being there for them in their time of need.

"We were thinking of more of an evil dimension, like the Vale of Shadows," Dustin told him.

"You know the Vale of Shadows? An echo of the material plane, where necrotic and shadow magic." He gave them the definition they already knew.

"Yeah, exactly," Mike nods his head. "If that did exist, a place like the Vale of Shadows, how would we travel there?"

"Theoretically of course," Lyn smiles at him.

He took a clean plate out from under his dirty plate and pulls a pen from his jacket pocket. "Well, picture an acrobat standing on a tightrope." He drew a stick figure under two lines. "Now, the tightrope is our dimension. And our dimension has rules. You can move forward, or backward. But, what if right next to our acrobat, there is a flea? Now, the flea can also travel back and forth, just like the acrobat." He draws flea and arrows to indicate how the subjects could move. "Right?" He looks up to make sure they understood.

They nod their heads, "Right."

"Here's where things get really interesting. The flea can also travel this way along the side of the rope. He can even go underneath the rope." He draws some more arrows.

"Upside down," They were excited to be getting somewhere with this theory.

"Exactly," He smiled, happy that they were getting it.

"But we're not the flea, we're the acrobat." Mike points out the next problem.

"In this metaphor, yes, we're the acrobat." He nodded his head.

"So we can't go upside down?" Lucas seeing the same problem that Mike did.

"No." He shook his head.

"Well, is there any way for the acrobat to get to the Upside Down?" Lyn leans in like she would be able to hear Mr. Clarke's words better that way.

"Well, you'd have to create a massive amount of energy. More than humans are currently capable of creating, mind you, to open up some kind of tear in time and space and then...." He folded the paper plate and pokes a hole through it with his pen. "... You create a doorway."

"Like a gate?" Dustin asks for clarification.

"Sure. Like a gate. But again, that is all..." Mr. Clarke wanted to make sure they weren't going to do something crazy.

"Theoretical." Lucas finishes for him.

"But what if this gate already existed?" Mike asks, seeing as the monsters seem to be snatching people and taking them back to the Upside Down.

"Well, if it did, I think we'd know. It would disrupt gravity, the magnetic field, our environment.

Heck, it might even swallow us up whole. Science is neat. But I'm afraid it's not very forgiving." He smiled weakly at them.

They were back in the Wheeler's basement. Mike was showing El the flea and the acrobat demonstration with a sheet of paper. "It would take a lot of energy to build a gate like this. But that's got to be what happened. Otherwise, how'd Will get there, right?"

"Right." El nods her head. Lyn wasn't sure if she really understood. Everything about this girl was a mystery. Did she know how to read and write? Could she even do simple math? If she didn't know the basic then how could she understand a complicated science theory?

"What we want to know is do you know where the gate is?" Lucas leaned forward in his seat to ask her. She slowly shook her head. "Then how do you know about the Upside Down?" He throws his hands in the air.

El turns her head to stare at Dustin making them turn their attention to him. "Dustin, what are you doing? Dustin?" Lyn stares at her brother. He didn't look up from his compass as he paced the floor. It took Lyn, Lucas, and Mike yelling his name for him to look up.

"I need to see your compasses." He told Mike.

"What?" Mike stares at him.

"Your compasses, all of your compasses, right now!" Dustin yells. Being that the boy never gets that serious often, the group got up to gather all the compasses the Wheelers had and dump them on the table.

Dustin smiles as he laid the compasses side by side. "What's exciting about this?" Mike stares at his friend.

"Well, they're all facing north, right?" He points at the compasses.

"Isn't that what they're supposed to do?" Lyn raises an eyebrow.

"Well, that's not true north," Dustin told them.

"What do you mean?" Mike look even more confused.

"I mean exactly what I just said. That's not true north. Are all three of you seriously this dense?" He gasps at their stupidity.

Mike and Lucas shrug not knowing where he was going with this. "Watch yourself. I might not know compasses, but I know how to stop your allowance." His sister reminds him.

He rolled his eyes and continues to explain. "The sun rises in the east, and it sets in the west. Right? Which means that's true north," He points in the direction of north.

"So what you're saying is the compasses are broken." Mike still didn't know what he was talking about.

"Do you even understand how a compass works? Do you see a battery pack on this?" Dustin picks a compass up to show them there was nowhere to put a battery.

"No." Mike sighs wishing he would get to the point.

"No, you don't, because it doesn't need one. The needle's naturally drawn to the Earth's magnetic North Pole." He explains to them.

"So what's wrong with them?" Lyn asks the million-dollar question.

"Well, that's what I couldn't figure out, but then I remembered. You can change the direction of a compass with a magnet. If there's the presence of a more powerful magnetic field, the needle deflects to that power. And then I remembered what Mr. Clarke said. The gate would have so much power..." Dustin was finally able to get them on his train of thought.

"It could disrupt the electromagnetic field." Mike stares down at the compass.

"Exactly," He nodded his head.

"Meaning, if we follow the compasses' north..." Lucas smiles that they found a way to the gate.

"They should lead us to the gate." Dustin smile in triumph.

"Yes! Yes! We're one step closer!" Lyn pulls the boys into a hug. They scream and jump around in celebration.

They didn't notice, El sitting on the couch with a freak out look on her face. She knew the real danger that they were foolish trying to take on.

"Let's go." Mike grabs a compass. Each of them put on their backpack and grabs a compass and head out the door.

They end up walking along the old train tracks. Lyn, Lucas, and Dustin were in the front with El and Mike a couple of yards behind them.

"How much further?" Lucas turns to Dustin.

"I don't know. These only tell direction, not distance. You really need to learn more about compasses." Dustin had a self-righteous tone as he shook his head.

"I'm just saying. How do we know when we get to the gate?" Lucas asks.

"Uh, I think a portal to another dimension is going to be pretty obvious." Dustin scoffed.

Lucas looks back at El and Mike before turning back to the Henderson siblings. "Do you think she's acting weird?"

"You're asking if the weirdo is acting weird." Dustin raises an eyebrow.

"I mean, weirder than normal?" Lucas stared back at her. El was taking a lot of deep breaths as she looked around the forest.

"I don't know. Who cares?" Dustin shrugs.

"She's not being weird. She scared. If she is frightened with those powers of her, then I would say we should all be scared." Lyn walks ahead of the boys.

She understood their annoyance with El. She didn't seem to want to help at all. She was content with sitting in the Wheeler basement for the rest of her life. Even, Lyn found herself getting angry with the

girl. She had to remind herself that El had a completely different up bring than them. She was probably abused and isolated. She didn't know how to interact with people.

The compasses lead them to the junkyard. "Oh, no," Dustin gasps.

"Why, did you just say oh no?" Lyn glare at her brother's back. Her feet were screaming, if all this was for nothing she might strangle him.

"We're headed back home." He told them.

"What?" Lyn and Lucas scream.

"Are you sure?" Mike asks.

"Yeah, I'm sure, setting sun right there. We looped right back around." Dustin points behind them to the sun. Lyn groans realizing that he was right.

"And you're just realizing this now?" Lucas glares.

"Why is this all on me?" Dustin whines.

"Because you're the compass genius!" Lucas yells at him.

"Hey, calm down! Yes, Dustin was being an ass early with his compass knowledge but it is not solely his fault. Any one of us could have realized that we were heading back home." Lyn defuses the situation.

"What does your compass say?" Dustin asks them.

"North," They replied staring down at the compass in their hands.

"Makes no damn sense," Dustin looks around. He knew he did everything right. They should be at the gate right now.

"Maybe the gate moved." Mike look around too.

"I don't think a portal to another dimension can move around with ease." Lyn shook her head.

"I think it's something else screwing with the compasses," Dustin told them.

"Maybe it's something here." Mike was about to suggest searching the area.

"No, it has to be like a super magnet. It's not going to be some random object." Lyn dismissed his idea.

"It's not a magnet. She's been acting weirder than normal. If she can slam doors with her mind, she can definitely screw up a compass." Lucas points a finger at El.

"Why would she do that?" Mike put his hands on his hips.

"Because she's trying to sabotage our mission! Because she's a traitor!" Lucas walks over to her.

"Lucas, what are you doing?" Mike follows him in concern for El.

Lyn was about to walk over there, but Dustin grabs her. "They need to work this out." She grunts but nods her head.

"You did it, didn't you? You don't want us to reach the gate. You don't want us to find Will." Lucas got up in her face to accuse her.

"Lucas, come on, seriously, just leave her alone!" Mike pleads with his friend.

"Admit it." He demands. When she didn't say anything, Lucas grabs her sleeve. "Fresh blood, I knew it."

"Lucas, come on" He pushed his friend off the girl.

"I saw her wiping her nose on the tracks! She was using her powers!" He turns to Mike.

"Bull! That's old blood. Right, El?" He looks at El to tell Lucas that she wasn't doing anything. She didn't say anything. Tears were running down her face. "Right, El?" He asks her again.

"It's not... it's not safe." She shook her head crying. Lyn gasp, she

couldn't believe that she would do something like that.

"She's been playing us from the beginning!" Lucas glares at Mike for letting her in. With things heating up Lyn took a step forward in case she had to break anything up.

"That's not true. She helped us find Will!" Mike defends his crush.

"Find Will? Find Will? Where is he, then? Huh? I don't see him." Lucas mockingly looks around the junkyard.

"You know what I meant." Mike glare, tired of dealing with Lucas's attitude towards El.

"No, I actually don't. Just think about it, Mike. She could've just told us where the Upside Down was right away, but she didn't. She made us run around like headless chickens." Lucas points out that El was making them figure most of everything out themselves.

"Alright, calm down!" Lyn moves to push them apart, but Lucas pushes her back.

"Don't take our anger out on her." Dustin stood in front of his sister to glare at Lucas.

"Why can't you guys see that she used us, all of us? She helped just enough so she could get what she wants: food and a bed. She's like a stray dog." Lucas screams at them.

"Screw you, Lucas!" Mike got in his face to yell at him.

"No! Screw you, Mike. You're blind because you like that a girl's not grossed out by you.

But wake up, man! Wake the hell up! She knows where Will is, and now she's just letting him die in the Upside Down." Lucas points out what he believes to be the hard truth. It sunk in for Lyn too. She was sure that El had her reason for fearing the monsters that live there. Whether it was to protect them or herself, Lyn didn't know.

"Shut up!" Mike snaps.

"For all we know, it's her fault." Lucas points at El.

"Shut up," Mike repeats himself.

"We're looking for some stupid monster but did you ever stop to think that maybe she's the monster?" Lucas glared at the girl still wearing the pink dress.

"I said shut up!" Mike tackles Lucas down to the ground.

"Stop!" El yells.

"Knock it off, you idiots," Lyn screams at them. The three from the sidelines were yelling for them to quit it as they wrestle around.

"Mike, get off!" Dustin yells. As he said that, Lucas was able to get the upper hand and flip them over. When he did, El let out a scream sending Lucas flying across the junkyard. He hit a piece of scrap metal and his body went limp.

"Lucas! Lucas!" Lyn, Dustin, and Mike ran over to him. They kneel down to be by his side.

"Lucas, are you all right?" Mike tried to shake him.

"Lucas, come on!" Dustin calls to him.

"Lucas, wake up! Lucas!" Lyn reaches over to check for a pulse. She let out a sigh of relief when she felt that he had one.

"Why would you do that? What's wrong with you? What is wrong with you?" Mike turns around to scream at El. She stood there crying as she stared at Lucas. She didn't mean to do that.

"Please Lucas. Please get up." Lyn pleads with him. Lucas opens his eye and slowly sat up. "Mike, he's up. He's up." She pulls the boy's attention from El to his childhood friend.

"Lucas, you okay?" Mike bent down to ask him.

"Lucas, how many fingers am I holding up? Lucas, how many fingers?" Dustin held up three fingers. Instead of answering him, he's

main focus was sitting up.

"Let me see your head." Mike reaches over to try and touch him.

"Get off of me!" He smacks Mike's hand away from him. He stood up slowly with Lyn's help.

"Lucas, just let me see." Mike tried again.

"Get off of me!" He smacks his hand away and walks off.

"Lucas, come on." Mike went to go after him, but Dustin pulls him back.

"Let him go. Man, let him go." He knew that Lucas needs time to cool off.

"Where is El?" Mike looked to see she wasn't frozen in that one spot anymore.

Lyn looks around to see that she wasn't anywhere. "El? El! Eleven! El! Eleven! El! Eleven!" They went around the junkyard screaming for her because despite everything the girl was their friend.

6. The Monster

Rosalyn took a sip from her thermos flask that was filled with coffee. Running around in the woods all day with the boys and working a night shift left the teen exhausted. She was running on caffeine and will power. She squints her eyes when she saw someone on a ladder spraying something on the theatre sign.

She gasps when she saw that the sign now read All the Right Moves starring Nancy THE SLUT Wheeler. She parks the car and got out ready to throat punch someone. Anger and coffee didn't mix well together. "Hey, you came to admire the beautiful artwork." Tommy smiles smugly.

She pushes him aside to shake the ladder that Steve was standing on. "Woah... what the hell?" Steve shouts. He looks down to see Rosalyn who was now being held by Tommy staring up at him with fire in her eyes. He climbs down before she could escape his friend's grasp. "Are you crazy?" He glares for the first time at the brunette in his friend's arms.

"Yes, I am and you're an asshole. How can you do that to Nancy?" She grits her teeth as she wiggles around trying to get away from Tommy.

Carol glares at her boyfriend who seems to be enjoying holding the other girl more than he should. He had one arm around her waist while the other was over her chest. She recognizes the look of pleasure on his face when Lyn gave another fail attempt of escaping him. She was smashing her breasts against his arm and pushes her ass into his groins as she thrashes around.

He thrust his hips into her making both girls react. "Fuck you, Tommy." Carol slaps the side of his face at the same time Lyn elbows him in the ribs.

"Fuck!" He yells letting go of the girl. Carol went to cry in Steve's car. Her boyfriend went in after her.

"You and your friends are disgusting pigs." Lyn glare at Steve.

"Tommy is a pig for his body reacting to a girl rubbing upon him. I'm a pig for having a cheating girlfriend." Steve rolls his eyes.

"He's a pig for many different reasons and you're a pig for humiliating Nancy. She isn't a cheater." She defends the girl. She wasn't even sure why. Nancy and she were never close. Before Nancy went out with Steve they were civil and now they weren't even that. But, yet here she was defending the girl.

"I saw her with my own two eyes. They were sitting on her bed together, his arms around her." He hisses as he remembers what he saw in the window.

"Are you kidding me? They were sitting on the bed. Not kissing or fooling around but sitting." She let out a bitter laugh.

"I'm sorry for not sticking around for the show like that pervert would have." He snaps.

"No, Harrington. I'm sorry that you're an ass who goes around assuming things. Now, in total, I've only had eight hours of sleep in the past three days, so I'm going to go home now. You should too because I'll be calling the cops when I get there." Lyn got back in Darling. She looks in her review mirror as she drove off. She was glad to see Steve was getting into his BMW.

She let out a sigh of relief when she parks her car in the driveway. She got out and uses her keys to open the front door. She locks it before heading to the kitchen. She turns on the light and made her way to the phone that was hanging on the wall. She dials 911. "Hello, this is Sarah. I'm a 911 operator, what is your emergency?" The female voice asks.

"I'm calling to report that I saw some kids vandalizing the Hawks theatre when I was on my way home from work," Lyn told her.

"How many kids were there? What exactly did you see them doing? Where are you now?" Sarah asks.

"There were three of them: two boys and one girl. One was on a ladder, spray painting something on the sign. I'm at home now" She

answers.

"Okay, we'll get someone down there right away." She promises.

"Thank you." Lyn hangs up and turns around to go to bed when she saw a post-it on the microwave.

"Dinner is in the fridge. PS don't drink any more coffee." Her mother wrote. She opens the fridge to see chicken culet, mash potatoes, and corn on the cob. Her mouth-watering made the decision for her to put sleep off for a little while longer. As she put the plate in the microwave, she couldn't help but think about her mother.

Her mother was a sweetheart who doted on her children. Lyn never doubted that her mother loved her. The woman's major flaw was that she couldn't hold a job. She depends on her ex-husband and daughter, showing no signs of shame about it. It made Lyn sick to know that she would be supporting the woman for the rest of her life. She scolds herself, remembering that family is supposed to take care of each other. She pays for things and her mom takes care of her.

The microwave dings, taking her out of her thoughts and she was reminded why she tried not to think of her situation with her mother. She always went in circles of resentment and guilt until she made herself dizzy.

"Go away," Lyn mutters. She pushes Dustin who was trying to shake her awake.

"No, get up. We have to get Mike to shake Lucas's hand. That way the party can be repaired." He continued to shake her.

"Dustin leaves her alone, she needs her sleep." Their mom pulls him away from her.

"No, it's fine. I'm up. I can give him a ride to Mike's." Lyn sat up. The yawn that came out of her mouth betrayed her.

"No, you need to sleep. Dustin can ride his bike to Mike's." Mrs. Henderson pushes her daughter back down and covers her with the knitted blanket.

"Seriously?" Dustin yells at his mother.

"Yes, I'm serious Dustin. Sleep is important. She could get sick. Besides she's most likely to crash the car with how tired she is. She likes this because she was driving you around all day yesterday before she works the night shift." She drags her son out of the room by the back of his shirt.

Lyn wanted to get up and argue that she was fine, but her body wasn't listening to her. She didn't have the energy stop her eyelids from closing.

Lyn groans as she rolls out of bed. She zombie walks her to the bathroom to splash water on her face. It was while she was brushing her teeth that Dustin trying to wake her up came back to her. She made her way around the house while continuing to brush her teeth. She couldn't find him anywhere.

Her mom was the recliner with Meows in her lap. Lyn went into the kitchen to spit the toothpaste into the sink. "Where's Dustin?" She went back into the living room to ask her mother.

"He went to Mikes." Her mother's eyes stay on the TV.

She rolls her eyes as she ran up to her room. She took off her cotton shorts and a tank top. She pulls on a pair of high wasted stonewash jeans. She buttons up a black short sleeve shirt that tied up at the bottom. She slides on her beat-up converse. She brushes her hair and uses a scrunchie to put half her hair up in a ponytail.

She walks out of her room and grabs her keys and wallet off the counter in the kitchen. "Bye Mom. I'm going to check on Dustin." She yells as went out the front door. She got into Darling and started driving around Hawkins looking for her ducklings. She pulls over when she saw Jonathan and Nancy loading a car.

She jumps out of the car to walk over to them. "Did you see Dustin, Mike, or Lucas around?" She asks while looking around herself.

"No, why? Is something wrong?" Nancy asks.

"No, nothing is wrong. They wanted to go see a rated R movie and I told them I would take them today." She shrugs, lying smooth. She looks down to see the box full of chains and a bear trap. There was a propane tank next to it. "What this for?" She cocks an eyebrow at them.

"We're going monster hunting." Jonathan scratches the back of his neck, saying the first thing that came to mind.

"Monster hunting...oh my god. Do you know?" She steps closer to whisper to them.

"Do you know?" Nancy whispers back with wide eyes.

"Obviously I know if I'm asking if you know. How did you find out?" Lyn couldn't believe that this whole time they could have had two more people helping out.

"We saw the monster. How did you know?" Jonathan pulls out a picture from his jacket to show her. Lyn grabs it to see a large tall shadowy figure standing in the forest. The picture was dark so there wasn't much detail but it was easy to see that thing wasn't human.

"We found someone else from the Upside Down." She gave the picture back to him.

"The Upside Down?" Jonathan tilts his head.

"It's where the monster lives in another dimension. The boys are looking for the gate or her right now. I'm not sure." She explains to them.

Before they could ask any questions, a car drove by honking their horn at them. "Hey, Nancy can't wait to see your movie!" Some boy from their school leans out the passenger window to yells at her.

"What the hell was that about?" Jonathan asks.

"I don't know." Nancy shook her head before running down the street.

"Nancy!" Jonathan runs after her.

"Fucking cops, they didn't get it clean up by now." She shook her head. She ran after them to find Jonathan staring up at the theatre's sign that still read All the Right Moves starring Nancy THE SLUT Wheeler. Nancy held back tears as she looks around seeing everyone's eyes on her. "I'm sorry Nance. I saw Harrington spraying it last night. I call the cops I thought they'd have it clean up by now." She put a hand on her shoulder.

"You don't have to be sorry. You didn't do it." She shook her head. With a calm rage, she walks into the alley right next to them. Jon and Lyn share a look before following her.

Lyn's jaw drops when she rounds the corner to see Nancy slap Steve in the face. "Yes, Nancy!" She cheers, walking over with Jon.

"Speak of the devil. Hi." Tommy smirks at Jonathan. He jumps down from the steps he was on.

"You came by last night?" Nancy figures out.

"Ding! Ding! Ding! Does she get a prize?" Carol snickers. Jon grabs the back of Lyn's shirt when she went to launch for her. Lyn didn't know what it was about the girl, but every time she spoke or did that smug smirk she wanted to kick the crap out of her.

"Look, I don't know what you think you saw, but it wasn't like that," Nancy told Steve.

"What, you just let him into your room to study?" Steve scoffs.

"Or for another pervy photo session?" Tommy laughs.

"We were just..." Nancy couldn't think of a lie on the spot. She couldn't tell him the truth that he was comforting her about seeing a monster that may be hunting down her best friend.

"You were just what? Finish that sentence. Finish the sentence." He glares down at Nancy. He scoffs when she couldn't answer. "Go to hell, Nancy."

"Come on, Nancy." Lyn grabs her arms. "You don't need to explain yourself to some douche bag that would humiliate you like that.

Leave him with the mouth breathers he belongs with." She pulls Nancy along. Jonathan follows behind them.

Something in Steve snaps, seeing the only two girls that made him feel strong emotions walk off with the town loner push him over the edge. "You know what, Byers? I'm actually kind of impressed. I always took you for a queer, but I guess you're just a little screw-up like your father. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, that house is full of screw-ups. You know, I guess I shouldn't really be surprised, a bunch of screw-ups in your family." He pushes Jon in the back repeatedly when he wouldn't turn around.

Lyn and Nancy look back when Jon froze at the mentions of his family. "Jonathan, leave it," Nancy told him sternly.

"A reaction would be giving him what he wants." Lyn glare at the popular teen behind her friend.

"I mean, your mom I'm not even surprised what happened to your brother." Steve gave him another push.

"Shut the fuck up, Harrington." Lyn snap when he spoke of Will, but Steve kept going.

"I'm sorry I have to be the one to tell you, but the Byers, your family, is a disgrace to the entire..." Jon turns around to punch Steve in the face stopping him mid-sentence. Steve fell into the wall but recover quickly to tackle Jon to the ground.

Carol and Nancy were screaming for them to stop while Tommy was cheering them on. Lyn watched silently. She couldn't help comparing the fight she was seeing now to the one she saw yesterday. In detail, they were the same, two boys grappling on the ground while trading punch. But, it was completely different. Mike and Lucas were just reaching purity and neither knew how to fight. The boys look like kittens compared to the wolves that were going at each throat right now. Steve stay in shape with basketball and Jon had to carry heavy boxes at his job. Their punches had a lot more impact.

"Get in there. He's going to hurt himself!" Carol pushes her boyfriend when Jon and Steve stood up to box.

Tommy went to stand in between them, but Steve pushes him out of the way. "Get out of here! Get out of here!" Tommy put his hands up and back away, more than glad to have the fight continue.

They trade a few more punches before Jon lands a hard one to Steve's mouth. It knocks him down and busted his lip. "Jonathan, stop! Stop! You're going to hurt him!" Nancy yells at him. Jon ignores her to jump on top of Steve and rain down punches on him. The teens watching the fight turn their heads when they heard the police sirens.

"Jon stop already, you won." Lyn went over to try to yank him by the collar off. Jon was seeing red and couldn't register what anyone was saying. He ends up elbowing her in the eye when he pulls his fist back to punch Steve again. She let out a scream, putting her hands over her eye.

"Rosa!" Nancy ran over to pull her away from the fight. She pulls the girl's hands back to see that her eye was red and her eyebrow was bleeding.

"Hey, he's had enough, man! I said he's had enough!" Tommy tried to pull him off, but Jon wouldn't budge. "Go, Carol!" He told his girlfriend. She and Nicole ran off as the police got out of their car.

"You have to go find the boys." Nancy pushes Lyn.

"What no!" She shook her head.

"Go! They need you." Nancy pushes her again. Lyn gave her a hard look before running after Nicole and Carol.

"Oh! My nose!" She turns around when she heard a cop cry out. Jon elbows him while he was dragging him off of Steve. It gave Tommy enough time to grab his friend and make a run for it.

"Get back here! Get back here, you little punks!" The cop yells after them. She turns forward and focused on putting more distance between her and the officer.

After running the third block, she looks back to see that he wasn't chasing them anymore. She leans against the wall panting. "I'm surprised you can run like that with all that fat on you." Nicole

snickers, reminding Lyn of the others around her.

"You got makeup running down your face. I fix that before everyone sees the ugly behind it." She glared at the girl. Nicole gasps and digs through her purse looking for a mirror. Lyn was happy that she left the house today without putting any on.

"You got blood running down yours. Are you alright?" Steve reaches out to grab her chin.

She smacks his hand away before he could touch her. "Worry about your face. It looks like one big bruise." She pushes herself off the wall and began her walk back to Darling.

People stare at her in shock as she walks past them. A few tried to stop the bleeding girl but she shrugs them off. She drops herself in the driver seat and grabs the first aid kit out of the glove department. She used alcohol wipes to clean her eyes up. She put a butterfly Band-Aid over her eyebrow.

She put a compass on her dashboard and started the car up. She glances at it as she drove around. The way it twitches when she drove along Mirkwood made her pull over. "I should have come here first," She mutters. She grabs the compass from the dash and the crowbar from the floor by the passenger seat. She got out and follows the compass that was leading her to walk along a fence.

Her eye went wide when she saw Lucas climb down from a tree. "Lu-." She calls for him. He turns around to put his finger to his lip to hush her. He pulls a notebook and a pencil out of his backpack. He wrote something down before showing it to her. It said to be quiet, we can't talk here.

She nods her head. They walk back to the car. Lucas put his bike in the trunk before getting into the passenger seat. She got into the driver seat and took off as fast as she could.

"The gate is in the lab. The bad guys are spying on us in those vans pretending to be repairmen. One was across the street from my house we have to get everyone else." He told her.

"Should I go to Mike's?" She asks.

"I don't know where they are, they're looking for El." He turns his walkie talkie on. He tries to connect either Mike or Dustin while Lyn drove to the Wheeler's house.

7. The Bathtub

"Shit," Lucas hit the car door when Lyn made a sharp turn.

"I'm sorry." She apologizes. She was speeding through residential neighborhoods trying to get to Mike's house as fast as possible. She needs to at least get Lucas in better range so that he could make contact with them.

"If you guys can hear me, say something. DUSTIN! MIKE! ELEVEN!" He yells into the walkie talkie.

"Lucas!" The two let out a scream of joy when Dustin came over the radio.

"Yes, it's Lucas. I found the gate. Bad men are coming. They know about Eleven. You have to get out of there." He yells.

"Lucas, I can't hear you but we're at Mike's house," Dustin told him. Lucas repeated himself. When the radio comes up silence he yells it again. Lyn pushes the gas pedal to the floor to go faster. She prays that people would hear Darling's engine and not try to cross the street.

"Lucas, if you can hear us, slows down. We can't understand you." Mike's voice came through the radio.

"Yes, I copy! Do you? They know about Eleven! Get out of there! They know about Eleven! The bad men are coming! All of them! Do you hear me? The bad men are coming! The bad men are coming!" Lucas screams into the walkie.

"Bad men!" Mike yells back. Lyn and Lucas let out a sigh of relief that they got the message.

"Why is it silent?" Lyn went from feeling relief back to anxiety in a split second.

"I don't know. Dustin! Dustin, do you copy?" He kept repeating it into the radio only giving short chance for a response.

"Yeah, Lucas, they're on us." He told them, making the two in the car curse.

"Where are you?" Lucas asks next.

"Cornwallis," Dustin tells them.

"Tell them to meet us at Elm and Cherry." Lyn took a sharp U-turn to meet up with the three kids.

"Meet us at Elm and Cherry. Copy," He relays the message.

"Elm and Cherry! Okay." Dustin was breathing heavy from riding the bike as fast as he could.

Lyn stop the car when they got to the street that they were supposed to meet the kids on. "Where are they?" She looks around for them.

"There they are!" Lucas points to the three bikes that were coming their way. Dustin and Mike quickly shove their bikes in the trunk. The three kids got into the car.

"Lucas! Rosalyn!" Dustin yells their names. He was happy to see that they were okay.

"Where are they?" Lyn turns around to ask the kids.

"I don't know," Mike said through deep breaths.

"I think we lost them," Dustin said in the same manner.

Tires screeching made them look back to see three vans chasing after them.

"Go, go, go, go!" Dustin screams at his sister. Lyn slams down on the gas and race down the road.

"Go, go, go, go, go! Faster, faster!" Mike orders the driver. Lyn grinds her teeth, how were these vans able to keep up with Darling, what kind of horsepower did they have under their hood?

"Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit!" Dustin chants as the vans got closer to

them.

"Fuck!" Lyn yells when another van pulls in front of them. It was racing towards them playing a game of chicken. Right when Lyn was about the turn the wheel to go off the road and ride on the sidewalk. The van was left into the air and it flies over them upside down and slams down behind them. It forces the other vans to stop.

"Where do we go?" Lyn asks now that they lost the bad guys.

"Go to the junkyard," El told her. Lyn looks in the rearview mirror to nod her head at El. She drove into the junkyard and parks her car in the middle of the field. They climb out of the car. Mike and Lyn help El out. They set her down on a large tire.

"Holy, holy shit! Did you see what she did to that van," Dustin jumps around.

"No, Dustin, we missed it." Mike rolls his eyes. Lyn grabs the first aid kit from the glove department of Darling. She kneels in front of El to use an alcohol wipe to get the blood dripping from her nose.

"I mean that was..." He tried to think of a word to describe it.

"Awesome. It was awesome." Lucas said making everyone turn to him in surprise. He went over to kneel beside El. Lyn stood up to give them their moment. "Everything I said about you being a traitor and stuff I was wrong. I'm sorry." He apologizes to her.

"Friends, friends don't lie. I'm sorry, too." El smiles weakly at him.

"Me, too," Mike held his hand out. Lucas got up to shake his hand. Dustin and Lyn share a smile, glad to have their friends getting along again.

"Now that everyone kissed and made up, what are we going to do?" Dustin asks.

"I'll show you guys the layout of the lab." Lucas went around to grabs three sticks and an empty soda can. He laid them out on the ground. He motions for everyone to gather around. They sat down in a circle. "This is Randolph Road, right here. The fence starts here and goes all

the way around. And this is the lab right here. The gate has to be in there somewhere. It's got to be." He uses the sticks to demonstrate the fence and a soda can to represent the lab.

"Well, who owns Hawkins Lab?" Dustin asks.

"The sign says Department of Energy," Lyn remembers seeing the sign as she walks along the fence.

"Department of Energy? What do you think that means?" Dustin squints his eyes.

"It means government. Military." Mike explains.

"Then why does it say "Energy"?" He uses air quotes around energy.

"Just trust me, all right? It's military. My dad told me before." Mike said. Lyn rolls her eyes for two reasons. One, Mike always brought trust into it when he didn't know how to explain something. Two, Mr. Wheeler had to be the most clueless idiot she had ever met.

"Mike's right, there are soldiers out front." Lucas agrees.

"Do they make, like, light bulbs or something?" Dustin asks.

"Yeah, the military is taking up making light bulbs as their side hustle." Lyn rolls her eyes once again.

"No, weapons to fight the Russians, and Commies and stuff," Mike repeated what his dad told him.

"Weapons," Lucas gasps.

"Oh, Jesus, this is bad." Dustin sighs.

"Why are you surprised? You said it a hundred times Dustin that El is the ultimate weapon." Lyn didn't understand why they're freaking out. They knew from the start they were taking on bad guys.

"We only have one of her. What if they have a hundred superpower people?" Dustin pulls at his curls.

"This is really bad. The place is like a fortress." Lucas told Mike and Dustin.

"Well, what do we do?" Dustin looks at each of their faces.

"I don't know, but we can't go home. We're fugitives now." Mike reminds them.

"Guys? Do you hear that?" Dustin looks up as the noise of a helicopter got closer.

"I'm going to get Darling in the woods. You guys get on the bus." She nods her head to the bus. She got in the car and drives it into the woods. She cringes as the tree scrap against the side of her car. "I'm sorry, Darling." She rubs the roof.

"Come on, come on!" Her brother yells at her from the window of the bus. She put the car in park and rips the keys out of the ignition. She grabs her crowbar and ran over to the bus as the helicopter noise got louder.

"Get down!" Lucas yells. They drop down on the ground of the bus. Lyn shook in fear as the helicopter noise was so loud that it had to be right over them. They let out a sigh of relief when it got quieter. The helicopter still could be heard, but it was further away now.

Dustin was across from his sister. He narrows his eyes as he was taking a good look at her for the first time since the last saw her. "What happened to your face?"

The other preteens on the bus turned towards her, all wondering how they didn't notice her black eye and bandage on her eyebrow before. "Jonathan and Steve got into a fight. While trying to pull Jonathan off when the cop where coming, he elbowed me in the eye." She raises her hand to her left eye. Now, that the adrenaline was dying down she could feel the aching again.

"What were they fighting about?" Mike asks. She told them the whole story. "Douche bag Steve." He mutters under his breath. He had no idea what his sister saw in him.

The radio made a clicking noise letting them know someone was

about to talk. They crawl over as Mike grabs the walkie from out of his bag. "Mike, are you there? Mike? Do you guys hear me? Mike, it's me, Nancy. Mike, are you there? Answer. Mike, we need you to answer."

"Is that your sister?" Lucas recognizes her voice.

"Who's we?" Lyn ask.

"This is an emergency, Mike. Do you copy? Mike, do you copy?" Nancy's voice was becoming desperate.

"Okay, this is really weird." Dustin gasps. It had been a long time since Nancy ever showed that she cares about them.

Lucas went to grab the walkie, but Mike pulls it away. "Don't answer."

"She said it was an emergency." Lucas points to the walkie.

"What if it's a trick?" Mike kept the walkie away from him.

"It's your sister!" Lucas yells at him.

"What if the bad people kidnapped her? What if they're forcing her to say this? Lyn's right we don't know who's we. We can't answer." Mike argues.

As if Nancy heard him, she pleads, "I need you to answer."

"It's like Lando Calrissian. Don't answer." Dustin agrees with Mike.

"We need to know that you're there, Mike," Nancy spoke to them again.

"Listen, kid, this is the chief. If you're there, pick up. We know you're in trouble and we know about the girl." Jim Hopper's voice was now coming over the radio.

"Why is she with the chief?" Lyn narrows her eyes at the radio. Authority seems to the last thing they could trust right now.

"How the hell does he know?" Dustin asks the question that was on all their minds. If he knew then why was he only helping now?

"We can protect you, we can help you, but you got to pick up. Are you there? Do you copy? Over." Hopper tried to reach them again.

"Answer him," Lyn said making the preteens turn to stare at her. "We can't hide in this bus all day. We need to take a chance on something."

Mike slowly raises the radio to his mouth and clicks the button.
"Yeah, I copy, it's Mike. I'm here. We're here."

"Tell me your location and I'll get you kids," Hopper promises them.

Lyn grabs the walkie from Mike's hands. "Before we do that you have to agree to our conditions."

"What are they?" The man asks.

"You have to agree to not give the girl over to them. You have to promise that you won't use her as a weapon or make her do anything she doesn't want to do. You have to promise to remember she's human and not to overwork her. If you break this promise, the girl can and will stop your heart mid beat." She threatens the officer.

"I promise." He said without hesitation.

"We're in the junkyard." She told him.

"Are you crazy, you just threaten a cop?" Dustin slaps his sister in the back of the head.

"We have to protect each other." She glares at him.

"Thank you." El blushes at having so many people furiously care for her.

They move to the back of the bus. Dustin was pacing up and down the aisle. "Will you stop pacing?" Mike snaps. He was making him more nervous than he already was.

"It's been way too long. Do you know what? Maybe you're right. Maybe this is all a trap and the bad men are coming to get us right now!" Dustin was now ranting and pacing.

"It's not a trap. Why would the chief set us up? Nancy, maybe, but the chief?" Lucas glared at the boy.

"Lando Calrissian." He stops to shoot them a look before going back to pacing.

"Would you shut up about Lando?" Lucas snaps.

"I don't feel good about this. I don't feel good about this!" He shouts in Lucas's face, and then went back to pacing.

"When do you feel good about anything?" Lucas yells at his back.

"Oh my god, Dustin, please sit down. Can't you see that you're stressing everyone out?" Lyn grabs his sleeve to force him to sit down next to her. A roar of car engines made them run to the window.

"Shit!" Dustin yells when they saw two unfamiliar cars pull up. The preteens went to hide behind the bus seats. Lyn kneel down by the driver's seat with a crowbar in hand ready to swing at them.

The strange man in a suit forces open the bus doors and Lyn stood up to hit him with the crowbar. Before she could connect a hand pull him back. "What the hell are you doing?" Dustin yells when his sister moves to the door.

Lyn watch as Jim Hopper beat the crap out of the stranger. She looks out to see that he already took care of the other men. She moves back when Hopper made his way onto the bus. "All right, let's go." He told them. When they stay frozen in place, he yells with more force. "Let's go!" They ran out of the bus.

"Should I get Darling?" She looks towards the wood where her car was.

"No, they know the vehicle. It's not safe for anyone to be in that car right now." Mike shook his head. Lyn bite her lip, she hates the thought of leaving her car here, but she didn't have any other choice

right now. She climbs into the passenger seat of the 1980 Chevrolet K5 Blazer. The four preteens squeeze into the back seat.

"Where are we going?" She asks the officers.

"To the Byers," He told them. The ride there was quiet as the kids stare at the officer. They had a lot of questions on their minds, but it wasn't time for that right now.

They pull up to the Byers and got out of the car. Nancy came running out of the house and pull her brother into a hug. "Mike. Oh, my God. Mike! I was so worried about you."

"Yeah, uh me, too," Mike said awkward, not use to his sister showing him affection.

"Is that my dress?" She cocks her head at El.

"Properties Nancy, properties besides this dress is more for a little girl." Lyn grabs El's hand and led her into the house. Everyone follows after them.

She looks around at the house. She didn't know how anyone was living here. There were wires for Christmas lights up with no bulbs, trash and clothes were everywhere. She slowly made her way into the living room and took a seat along with everyone else. Mike explains to them the acrobat and flea theory with a piece of paper. "Okay, so, in this example, we're the acrobat. Will and Barbara, and that monster, they're this flea. And this is the Upside Down, where Will is hiding. Mr. Clarke said the only way to get there is through a rip of time and space."

"A gate," Dustin adds when he saw the adults and teens except his sister were confused.

"That we tracked to Hawkins Lab," Lucas told them where the gate was.

"With our compasses." Dustin had to add in the part of the compasses. "Okay, so the gate has a really strong electromagnetic field, and that can change the direction of a compass needle." He explains when

they still looked confused.

"Is this gate underground?" Hopper looks at them.

"Yes." El nods her head.

"Near a large water tank?" He asks.

"Yes." El nods again.

"How do you know all that?" Dustin asks.

"He's seen it." Lyn answers. From the look in the officer's eyes, she could tell the man had seen things he couldn't forget.

Lyn's head turn to Joyce when she started talking to El, "Is there any way that you could reach Will? That you could talk to him in this..."

"The Upside Down," El spoke. Lyn kept a careful watch on the girl. She was searching for a look of uneasiness on her face. If she saw any, she would pull the plug on whatever idea they had.

"Down?" Joyce repeats.

"Yeah," El nods her head.

"And my friend Barbara? Can you find her, too?" Nancy asks. It unnerves Lyn when El didn't respond to her. She just stares at Nancy. El didn't like to give bad news. It was likely that Barbara was in bad shape.

They stood around a small dining table and put a walkie talkie in front of her. "Listen, El, if you feel strain or weak at any time, you pull out alright. Don't push yourself to the limit like you did last time." Lyn kneels down to tell her.

"I promise," El whispers softly to her.

Being satisfied with that answer Lyn stood back up. El closes her eyes. Static noise went in and out on the radio. "I'm sorry." She opens her eyes and stares at Joyce.

"What's wrong? What happened?" Joyce felt herself start to panic.

"I can't find them." El whimpers. Jon walks out of the room as Joyce and Nancy cried.

Lyn grit her teeth as she glared at them. She knew they couldn't control their reaction, but they were making the El feel bad. "Hey, it's alright." She kneels down to hug the girl. "Just because you couldn't find them doesn't mean they're dead. Remember this small radio can't get you to the Upside Down. The last time we need a stronger radio."

"Can I go to the bathroom?" She stood up.

"Sure, I'll take you." Lyn grabs her hand and led her to the bathroom.

She went back to the kitchen, where the boys were explaining how El's powers work. "Whenever she uses her powers, she gets weak. The more energy she uses, the more tired she gets." Dustin explains to the people in the room.

"Like, she flipped the van earlier," Lucas told them.

"It was awesome." Dustin smile.

"But she's drained." Mike got them back on topic.

"Like a bad battery." Dustin tried to relate to the adults who seem to have a hard time grasp on to the supernatural.

"How do we make her better?" Joyce asks, desperate to get her son back.

"We don't. We just have to wait and try again." Lyn shot a glare at the two frantic women at the table. She wanted to find Will and Barb too, but not at the expense of El.

"Well, how long?" Nancy whines.

"I don't know, Nancy, why don't you flip over a van and tell me how long it takes to recover." She snaps.

"Hey, there no need to get hostile. I promise you that we wouldn't

overwork her and we won't." Hopper grabs the teenager that was reminding him of a mother bear, with the way she was flashing her fangs at the other females in the room.

El walks back into the room and whispers, "The bath."

"What?" Joyce turns around in her chair to ask the girl.

"I can find them in the bath," El remembers that she had to speak in full sentences. She told them about how she could recall things better when she was in the tank that was by the gate.

"Then we have to build a sensory deprivation tank. It time for you to talk to Mr. Clark again." Dustin turns to his sister.

"What, no Dustin. It was so awkward the last time. Besides you guys end up asking all the questions anyways." She rolls her eyes.

"Yeah, but when he hesitated you were able to get him to tell us," Lucas argues.

"Our teacher has a small crush on my sister," Dustin explains to the confused faces in the room.

"Ew," Nancy stuck her tongue out.

"What?" Hopper shouted.

"It's harmless." Mike waves it off.

"It's not like he has the guts to actually put a move on her." Lucas shrugs.

"I dialed the number, here you go." Dustin held the phone out for his sister.

"You're a brat." She snatches the phone from his hand.

"Hello?" Mr. Clarke answers his phone, wondering who would be calling this late.

"Hi, Mr. Clarke. It's Rosalyn Henderson." She told him.

"Rosalyn? Is everything okay?" His voice filled with concern.

"Yes, everything is fine. I have a science question." She ran a hand through her hair.

"It's ten o'clock on Saturday. Why don't we pick this up..." Lyn didn't know but he was glancing over at his date that was on the couch waiting for him. Mr. Clarke felt extra dirty talking to the teen he had a forbidden attraction to, even though there wasn't anything intimate about the conversation.

"When could we pick it back up... it's not like you're my teacher. I don't see you every day, unfortunately." She turns to face the wall, not wanting to see the other faces as she flirty to get information.

"What's your question?" He broke down for her. He felt guilty for thinking dirty when she spoke a certain way.

"Do you know anything about sensory deprivation tanks, specifically how to build one?" She got to the point.

"Sensory deprivation? What is this for?" He asks.

"Fun," She shrugs. She knew it was a lame answer but she couldn't think of anything else.

"Why don't we talk about it on Monday? After school, okay?" He really wanted to get back to his date and away from his taboo.

"How would that look, me going to your class after school? It's a small town, people have nothing to do but make wild rumors. No one is going to believe that I'm just a curious mind." Lyn made her voice small and innocent as she spoke to him.

"Tell him you want to unlock the door of curiosity?" Dustin tugs on her sleeve.

"Won't you help me unlock the door of curiosity?" She changes her tone to what she imagines was seductive, but she wasn't sure. It wasn't like she ever tried to seduce someone. She was going off the smutty book she read.

"Ew, I did not say to say that." Dustin gags.

Mr. Clarke let out a soft sigh, "Alright, get paper and pen."

She let out a happy sound. She grabs a pen and notepad before pushing Nancy out of her seat at the table. "I'm ready." She sat down and put the pen to the paper. She wrote down everything that Mr. Clark told her.

"That how you would do it. I don't know what you're doing Rosalyn, but be careful." He told her.

"Of course, I'll be careful. Thank you. You don't know how much this means to me. I'll see you on Monday when I pick up Dustin." She hangs up the phone. "Do you still have that kiddie pool we bobbed for apples in?" She looks across the table at Joyce.

"I think so." The older woman nods her head.

"Good we're going to need it, that and a lot of salt." She told them.

"How much is a lot?" Hopper asks.

She looks down at her notes, "1,500 pounds."

"Where are we going to get that much salt?" Nancy asks.

"The school," Hopper stood up.

"I'll get the pool." Joyce stood up and went outside.

Lyn walks over to the sink to see beer bottles pile in there. "Can I have these bottles?" She asks Jonathan.

"Sure, Lonnie left his mess like always." He shrugs.

Lyn grabs the box for the beer that was still on the floor. She was able to fit 18 bottles in there. She put the lighter that was on the counter in her back pocket. She took a shirt that was draped over a chair and put it on top of the box. "I'm ready." She picks up the box.

"Then let's go." Hopper walks out the door.

Lyn got to Hopper's passenger seat with her box in her lap. Lucas, Dustin, and El climb into the back seat of his car. Mike was going to join them in the back seat, but Nancy pulls him over to Joyce's car.

Hopper let Joyce pull out first and they follow them.

"What is a crush?" El broke the silence.

"What?" Lyn turns around to ask her.

"Dustin said Mr. Clarke has a crush on you. What does that mean? Does he want to crush you?" Her question made Lyn embarrassed. She never had to explain stuff like this to Dustin.

"No, crush is a code word. It means that he likes likes me." Lyn tries to explain with as little words as possible.

"Like like?" She tilts her head.

"It's when you like someone beyond a friendship. You know what we'll watch a romantic comedy when this is all over. That will explain everything." Lyn turns forward to avoid any more questions.

Hopper pulls up in front of the school. "You guys get out here. Jonathan and I will go get the salt from the back."

"Come on." Lyn got out and guide the kids into their school. "Dustin and Lucas set up the pool in the gym." She gave out orders.

"Okay." Lucas nods his head and took the pool from Joyce. Dustin helps him carry it as they made their way to the gym.

"Mike and I will get the hoses." Nancy grabs her brother's arm and drags him along with her.

"I'm going to go to the science lab to get this ready. Are you coming, El?" Lyn held up her box. El nods her head and follows after the teen.

"I'm coming too." Joyce went along. "What are you going to do with those anyway?" She opens the lab door for Lyn.

"I'm going to make Molotov cocktails." She put the box down on a lab

table. She took a paperclip off the teacher's desk and opens the cheap lock they had on the cabinet that held the chemicals. She grabs every chemical that she knew to be flammable and put it on the table. She took the largest beaker she could find. She pours the chemicals into it and stirs it up. She pours the mixture into the bottle. She rips up the shirt and soaks the pieces in the mixture of chemicals. She had a piece hanging out of each bottle.

"This will keep it dark for you just like in your bathtub." Lyn looks up to see Joyce handing El safety goggles that were wrapped in black duck tape. "You're a very brave girl. You know that, don't you? Everything you're doing for my boy, for Will, for my family. Thank you. Listen, I am going to be there with you the whole time. And if it ever gets too scary in that place, you just let me know, okay?" The woman reaches out to grab the little girl's hands. Lyn felt a little better that she wasn't willing to sacrifice El for her son.

"Yes." El nods her head.

"Are we ready?" Lyn put the bottles back into their box.

"Ready." El nods her head. Lyn picks up the box and they went to the gym. They walk in to see the swimming pool in the middle of the gym. Next to it was a cart with the walkie talkie on it and a carton of eggs.

"What's up with the eggs?" Lyn put her box down on the bottom shelf of the cart.

"To see if we did it right. It's ready." Dustin told her.

El took off her shoes, socks, and gave Mike his watch back. Joyce hand her the blackout safety goggles. After she put them on, Lyn and Joyce guide her into the pool. Everyone sat around the pool as El lay down in it.

Immediately the light started to flicker. "Barbara," She spoke making Nancy lean forward.

"What's going on?" Nancy turns to Mike.

"I don't know." Mike watches El with concern.

"Is Barb okay? Is she okay?" Nancy asks El.

"Gone! Gone! Gone! Gone! Gone! Gone." El screams out in horror.

Lyn reaches out to grab El's hand and gently pull her towards her. "I'm right here El. I'm next to you. Remember you're not really there. You're here with me."

Joyce grabs El's other hand. "We are all here, El, don't be afraid. I'm right here with you. It's okay."

"Castle Byers," She spoke after she calmed down. Jonathan and Joyce share a look while Lyn and the boys share one of their own. Finding Will was what all of them work so hard for.

"Will?" El called out.

"You tell him I'm coming. Mommy is coming." Joyce's grip tightened on El's hand.

"Your mom, she's coming for you," El spoke to Will.

"Hurry," Will's voice came from the radio.

"Okay. Listen, you tell him to stay where he is. We're coming. We're coming, okay? We're coming, honey." Joyce went from talking through El to speaking directly to Will.

"Just hold on a little longer," El told Will. "Will. Will. Will? Will!" She began screaming as low growl, pants, and whimpers were coming through on the radio.

El sat up in the pool and yanked her goggles off. Lyn pulls her out of the pool and onto her lap. "I'm right here, nothing is going to get to you. You remember what I swear to you on the night I meet you." She held onto El who was shiver and crying.

"You wouldn't let the bad guys get me." El would always remember the first time someone wanted to protect her.

"I'm going to keep that promise." Lyn kisses her forehead.

"You did so well," Joyce praise El.

Lyn picks El up and carried her to the bleachers. The boys follow them. Lyn sat her down as Lucas wraps a towel around her. Mike sat next to her and El automatically leans on him. Lucas sat behind her making sure the towel stay on her. Dustin sat down next to Mike while Lyn took the spot on the other side of El.

Lyn looks up as Hopper puts on his jacket and went outside with Joyce, Nancy, and Jonathan follow him out. They were probably going out to find the gate to get Will. As much as Lyn wanted to help with that, she knew they could handle it. Besides, she had a promise to keep. She was going to guard El. If she had to give her life to do it, she would.

8. The Upside Down

Lyn and the kids were sitting on the bleacher in the gym. All exhausted from the day they were having. Mike stood up and walks out of the gym. Lyn got up to follow him out of the school. "Nancy! Jonathan!" He yells out into the empty parking lot.

"They probably went with the chief and Mrs. Byers to get Will." Lyn grabs his arm to drag him back inside.

"All the crap she was saying about not keeping secrets and sticking together." He mutters under his breath and storm back into the gym. He thought for a second that Nancy and he could have the sibling relationship that Dustin and Lyn or Jonathan and Will have. But, maybe that kind of closeness only comes with an absent parent.

Lyn took the time to look at the school map that was on the wall. She was a freshman when they move here, so she didn't know the layout of the middle school. After feeling like she had a good picture of it in her head, she walks back into the gym at a poor time in the conversation.

"They're probably just sucking face somewhere." Dustin shrugs.

"Gross." Lucas and Lyn scrunch up their faces in disgust. She assumes they were talking about Nancy and Jonathan. At least she hopes they were, if not that left Joyce and Hopper. She didn't know if she was ready for that mental image.

"No, no way!" Mike shook his head.

"Did they go with the chief?" Lucas turns to Lyn seeing if she had some answers.

"I saw them walk out the door with him, but I don't know if they actually went with them," Lyn told them.

"No," El said suddenly.

"What? Did you see them?" Mike quickly turns to her. She nods her head. "Do you know where they went?" He asks.

"Yes." She nods.

"Where? Where did they go?" Lyn was amazed at his patience for her one-word responses.

"Demogorgon." El looks at him sadly.

"We have to go help them!" Mike walks towards the door. Lyn moves to stop him from doing so. Dustin and Lucas follow her lead.

"How? We don't have a vehicle. We don't even have your guy's bikes. By the time we walk to the gate, Nancy and Jonathan would be done already." Lyn points out to him.

"This is crazy. We can't just wait around." Mike throws his hands in the air.

"Mike, in case you forgot, we're still fugitives. The bad men are still looking for us." Lucas reminds him.

"Yeah, and we don't even know where your sister is." Dustin agrees with Lucas.

"El can find them." Mike shrugs like it was no big deal for her to try to use her powers again after she used so much of it.

"She exhausted, Mike. She's having a hard enough time staying awake." Lyn points to the girl behind them that was curled up on the bleachers.

"I still think we should stick to the chief's plan," Dustin put emphasize on the word plan. Mike wanted them to go into the Upside Down with just the shirts on their backs to save his sister who might not even need to be saved.

"Exactly, we stay here, keep El out of sight and keep her safe. That's the most important thing, remember? Besides, she's okay. She's with Jonathan." Lucas elaborated on his friend's point.

"Yeah, and she's kind of a badass now, so..." Dustin trails off on his sentence as he walks to the door.

"Where are you going? You just said stick to the plan!" Mike yells at his back.

"I am. I'm just going to go get some chocolate pudding. I'm telling you, Lunch Lady Phyllis hoards that shit." Dustin yells back over his shoulder.

"Oh, pudding," Lyn pulls the cart with the beer box on it and follows her brother to the chocolate goodness.

"Are you guys serious?" Mike yells out. Lucas shrugs at him before following the Henderson siblings.

"El needs to be recharged!" Dustin yells before he closed the door.

"What makes you think she's hoarding the pudding," Lyn ask her brother.

"Because every time it's on the menu we always run out, but that never happens with anything else. This means that she has to be hiding it somewhere." He enters the cafe like he was on a mission of a lifetime.

"I can't wait to see what kind of mood she'll be in on Monday when she finds it gone." Lucas rubs his hands together. The lady was always in a foul mood. She probably will be in rage mode come Monday. It wasn't like she could accuse anyone of stealing it, then she would have to admit she was hiding it in the first place.

Lyn left the cart by a table. They walk around the lunch counter and began looking everywhere for it. Lyn pocket lights when she found them and was able to find one for each of them. Smoking must be a bonding experience with the lunch ladies.

Lyn was walking farther in the back when she saw there were three boxes stack up against a fridge. "Dustin! Lucas! I think I found it." She moves the boxes of plates and utensils.

Dustin came around the corner with Lucas at his heels. He rips the door open and screams in triumph. "Found it! I knew she was hoarding it. I knew it. Always lying, saying she's out. Bald-faced liar," He grabs as much as he could carry. "Mike, I found the chocolate

pudding!" He turns around to yell. Mike and El were now sitting down in the dining area.

"Okay!" He yells back, knowing Dustin wouldn't stop until he got a response.

Lucas and Lyn fill up their arms with cans of pudding too. There was still some leftover, what did that lady need so much pudding for? They walk out to see El by herself.

"Where did Mike go?" Lyn places the pudding down on the table. Dustin and Lucas did the same covering the whole table with cans of pudding. They sat down to rip into it.

"Nancy." She points to the window. Lyn nods her head and passes her a spoon. "I know what like like is." She said, making them stop shoving their face to look at her.

"What happened while we were looking for pudding?" Lyn ask.

Before El could answer Mike came running in, yelling and waving his arms around. "Guys! Guys!"

"What is it?" Dustin sigh, frustrated that his pudding time was being interrupted.

"They found us." Mike pants. Dustin let out sighs and put some pudding in his pockets, earning an eye roll from everyone.

"Everyone takes a lighter." Lyn hands them out like it was candy on Halloween. "You can light the cloth and throw it at them." She pointed to the bottles.

She picked the box off the cart since the wheel squeaked. They made their way to the backdoor. They had to dip behind a trash can to avoid a few agents. "The west side of the building is clear." The agent spoke into the walkie talkie.

They smile at each other since that was where the backdoor was. It was almost too easy to move around these professional agents. "How did they find us?" Lucas whispers.

"I don't know, but they knew we were in the gym," Mike told them.

"Lando." Dustin gasps.

"Fucking cop," Lyn mutters under her breath.

With the back door insight, they all felt a sense of security that they were almost in the clear. But, of course, the fates could never make it that easy; the back door's busted up. "Got 'em!" Two agents charge at them.

"Go, go, go, go, go!" Mike screamed. Lucas grab a bottle from Lyn and lit it up before throws it behind them. They turn a corner, feeling the heat of the fire on their backs and the screams of the guards filled their ears.

Lyn let out a sigh as she thought they got away. That relief only lasted a few seconds as more agents came around another corner and made their way towards them. "Why does this school have so many corners?" She screams. She didn't realize how many blind spots there was until she wanted to see everywhere. They turn to run back the way they came from

"Freeze." The agent yells, but they didn't look back. The agents chase them down the main hallway.

They were forced to stop when more agents and a blonde lady cut in front of them. The lady quickly pointed a gun at them. The agents behind her did the same. Lyn pants as hopelessness filled her at being surrounded.

"Light another bottle and I'll shoot you." She moves the gun to Lyn.

The guards froze as the lights began to flicker. Lyn watch as the lady's eyes filled up with fear as blood began to drip from them. She and the agent's bodies drop lifeless to the floor. Lyn stares with wide eyes at how fast someone can go from being powerful to dead.

As that thought enter her mind, a thud came from beside her. She looks down to see El on the floor, knock out cold. They kneel down on the floor next to her. "El, are you okay? El!" Mike shook her. "Something's wrong." He looks up at them when she didn't wake up.

"She's just drained," Dustin told him.

"No, no, no, she won't wake up." Mike tears up.

"We have to get out of this hallway." She pushes the beer box into her brother's arms and scoops up El.

"Leave her. Put the child down and step away from her." An older white-haired man in a suit with more agents came around the corner.

"Fuck off!" Lyn held El closer to her.

"No! You want her, you have to kill us first." Mike stood in front of her to yell at the man.

"That's right!" Dustin moves to stand next to Mike.

"Eat shit!" Lucas moves to protect El too.

They were so focused on the man in front of them; they didn't notice the men coming from behind until they were grabbed.

"No! No! Get off me!" Dustin drops the box making the bottles crack open on the floor.

"You idiot!" Lucas was punching and kicking the man holding him.

"Let go!" Mike screams.

"You dumbass you're going to make me drop her," Lyn growl out as the guy struggled to pin her arms to her sides. The white hair agent grabs El from Lyn's arms. "No you fucker, give her back." She screams.

He moves down to the floor to lay her down on his lap. "Eleven? Eleven, can you hear me? Eleven?" He put a hand on each side of her face and shakes her head.

"Papa?" El whispers making Lyn swing her legs back to kick the guy holding her in the shin.

"You fucking bitch." He growls in her arm and painful tightens his

hold on her. Lyn cried out in pain.

"Hey, you prick that my sister," Dustin yells out next to her.

"Let her go! Let her go, you bastard!" Mike screams, making Lyn turn her attention back to El.

The man was turning her head back to him and whispering to her, so they couldn't hear.

"Mike. Mike. Mike." El points at him.

The light bulbs began sparking, making both the civilians and government workers freeze. Their eyes fell on the weak El, knowing this would kill her.

"Blood." Mike gasps.

"What?" Lucas still in the agent's arms turns to his friend.

"Blood." He repeated himself as a thud came from the wall.

"Fuck, there too much blood here." Lyn curse when she realized what he saying.

A monster busted out of the wall. "Demogorgon," Dustin yells out as the agents drop them to shoot at it.

"Come on, come on." Mike went to pick up El, but he was struggling. So, Lyn took her from his arms. They ran down the hall leaving behind the screeching animal and the armed agents. Mike leads them into the science lab. Lucas locks the door behind them.

"Come on, get her on the table." Dustin points to a table in the back. She put El down. They crowd around her.

"Just hold on a little longer, okay? He's gone. The bad man's gone. We'll be home soon, and my mom she'll get you your own bed. You can eat as many Eggos as you want. And we can go to the Snow Ball." Mike grabs her hands.

"Promise?" She whispers to him.

"Promise," Mike smiles down at her. Lyn smile at them, realize how El knew what like like was.

The monster cries of pain and the gunshots getting louder brought them back to reality. They stare at the door waiting for any signs of a threat. There was a loud thud and the gunfire continued for a little while more before stopping.

"Is-is it dead?" Dustin asks.

There were a few moments of silence before they go their answer. The Demogorgon jumps on the door breaking it down.

"Go, go, go, go!" Mike yelled.

"Go where?" Lyn screams at him. They didn't have anywhere to run. They were trapped in the classroom with the Demogorgon.

"Get the wrist rocket! Get the wrist rocket now!" Dustin points at the backpack that Lucas must have dropped off in the classroom at some point. The boys ran over to the bag. Lyn stayed in front of El, using herself as a human shield.

"Go, go, go, go, go!" Mike chants to Lucas who pulls his slingshot out. "Get the rocks, get the rocks, get the rocks! Getting the rocks!" He yells at Dustin who was digging through the bag.

Dustin pulls his hand out of the backpack to show that it was now filled with rocks. "Give me one." Lucas put his hand out. Dustin put one in his hand.

"Go! Go! Kill it! Kill it!" Dustin cheers his friend on.

"Fire! Fire!" Mike shouts in his ear.

Lucas shot rock after rock, nailing the monster right in the chest, but it didn't faze it. Which wasn't surprising, if a load of bullets couldn't stop it then rocks most feeling like nothing to it.

Lyn jumps when a hand grabs her shoulder. El pushes her to the side to stand up. "El, no if you use any more power you could die." She grabs the girl's arm to stop her.

"If I don't then all of you will die. All my friends will be dead. Goodbye Rosalyn." El pulls away from Lyn and walks over to the monster. Lyn tried to ran after her, but found that her feet couldn't move. She looks up at El, not believing that she was using her powers on her.

As Lucas shot his last rocks at the monster, El made it fly into the chalkboard. The boys stood there in shocks thinking the rocks work when El pushes past them.

"Eleven, stop!" Mike ran after her, but she waves her hand and made him fall into the cabinets against the wall.

The powerful monster squeals and wiggles around, but it couldn't get off the board. El walks in front of it. She turns around to look at her friends one last time. "Goodbye, Mike." She whispers when she eyes land on the boy who held a special place in her heart.

"No more." She put her arm up toward the creature. Lyn and the boys slam their hands over their ears at the high pitch screams it gave out. They shut their eyes when a light glow from the monster's chest and black dust was coming off of it.

There was a loud explosion making them open their eyes. There was a cloud of black dust falling to the ground to reveal the chalkboard had a dent and black blood where the monster used to be. "El? El? El! Eleven! Eleven! El! El, where are you? Eleven! El?" They scream out, but none of them sound as desperate as Mike.

Lyn was sitting in the waiting room of the hospital. Joyce and Hopper were successful in their mission to save Will. She kept an eye on Hopper. She made her move when she saw him go over to the vending machine.

"I know it was you that told the agents where we were." She leans against the side of the machine as she stares him down.

"You want to do this right now kid?" He sighs.

"I just want you to know that there no hard feelings." She shrugs.

"Really, because you seem like the grudge-holding type to me," He narrows his eyes at her.

"My break promise cancels out yours. I promise to make sure the bad guys didn't get her. I couldn't do it." She tried to stay stronger, but she breaks down towards the end.

"Oh god. Don't cry kid, it wasn't your fault. I'm sure you did everything you could." Hopper panics, not knowing who to deal with a crying teen.

"Come on, Rosalyn. Will is up." Dustin pulls on her arm, but stop when he saw her crying. "You made my sister cry." He glares at the cop.

"Jerk," Mike mutters. Lucas made an unimpressed noise at the officer.

"It wasn't him, I was just thinking about El. Go on and see Will without me. I don't want him to see me like this." She wipes the tears from their eyes. They ran off screaming Will's name over and over.

Lyn went back into the waiting room and took a seat next to Nancy who was sitting next to Steve. "I'm sorry about Barbara. I wish that we knew that the others knew from the start then maybe we could have come together soon and got to her in time." She looks over at Nancy. It must have felt lonely to be grieved by yourself for someone. Barbara's death did seem like a speed bump that they speed over. They didn't even have a moment of silence for her. It must have added insult to injury for Nancy.

"I'm sorry about El." She looks down at her hands. "I'm going to see Will." She stood up and walk out of the waiting room.

Steve moves so he was in the chair next to her. "Did you fight one of them too? Is that why your arms are all bruised up?" He whispers.

"No, I got this bruise from a government agent holding me down while they tried to kidnap El." She looks down at her arms that were black and blue.

"Government agent? El?" He tilts his bruised face in confusion.

"Do you know anything?" She huffed out of frustration.

"All I know is I went over to the Byers to apologize and I end up having to beat up a large monster with a bat cover in nails." He told her.

"Wait, you were able to beat it up with a bat." She reaches out to rub his arm. It only confused her more, his arms were tone but they weren't bulging muscles.

"W-w-what ar-e y-ou do-doing?" He stutters out.

"They shot bullets at the one that came to the middle school and it didn't affect it. How could you hitting the thing with a bat do any damage?" She continues to massage his arm like a muscle would pop out of nowhere.

He swallows a moan at having her rub his sore muscles and uses all his will power to push her hand off him. "I'm stronger then I look."

"It must have been a baby." She decided.

"What? No way it was at least 7 feet tall." He defends himself.

She peaks into the hospital room and saw Will in the bed with Joyce and Jonathan sitting by him. "Since when are you shy? Come in!" Will shouts at her when he saw her in the doorway.

"Hello there Duckling, nice to see you finally came back from your vacation." She walks over to the empty side of the hospital bed.

"Yeah, vacation at the Bates Motel." He scoffs getting a laugh from everyone around the bed.

"At least at the Bates, you would have gotten a shower, you stink." She pinches her nose.

"I was stuck in hell, what's your reason for stinking." He laughs.

"Fighting off government agents," She smirks.

"Did you really make Molotov Cocktails?" He smiles up at her.

"Oh yeah, but Lucas only got to throw one before an agent knocks them out of Dustin's hands." She told him.

"Did you at least get to see the one Lucas threw?" He asks.

"Nah, but I know it made a grown man scream." She smiles.

"I thought you could do that with just your face." He jokes.

"WILL." Joyce scolds him.

Lyn and Will share a look before breaking out in laughter. "I miss you, duckling." She grabs his hand.

"I miss telling you to stop calling me that." He pulls his hand away from her. He laughs at her pouting face. "I miss you too." He smiles softly at her.

9. Welcome Home

Lyn was sitting in the Wheeler's basement, but instead of being with her ducklings, she was with Nancy, Steve, and Jonathan. They were glancing at each other, not knowing what to say.

Nancy cleared her throat figuring she should get the ball rolling since this was her idea. "Um well, I invited you guys here because I thought since we can't talk to anyone else about this; we should talk to each other. We could be each other support systems. Because I don't know if your parents are like mine, but they are making like nothing happened."

"My mom doesn't know. I would like to keep it that way. The woman doesn't take change very well." Lyn thought of how her mother cried for a few months when they moved here. It took her mom along time to mourn her old life. It took even longer for her to adjust to her new life.

"My parents are clueless too, by the time they came back from their business trip my face was healed up, so." Steve shrugs.

"My mom and I are focused on getting Will healthy. I don't even have time to think about anything else." Jon looks down at his hands. He was uncomfortable with sharing anything with so many people. When Nancy invited him over, he didn't expect the other two. Not that he minds Lyn, but it was hard to be around Steve. For many different reasons, some he wasn't willing to admit out loud, not even to himself.

"Sometimes I talk to Dustin, not about the deep depressing stuff, but about the fun side of it," Lyn told them.

"The fun side?" Nancy pushes her eyebrows together. She wouldn't see anything fun about the Upside Down.

"We talk about the possibility of other universes and different creatures that might be in them. But, we mostly about El and the fun time we had with her. Like when we brought her all different types of candy, because she never had any before. The disgusted face she

made when she tried nougat for the first time." She laughs as she thought about how disappointed Dustin was. "But, I get what you mean Nancy. I can't talk to him about the nightmares, panic attacks, or the nagging feeling that it not over. I'm his rock. I'm not allowed to crumble, not in front of him." Lyn frown as she admits her worries.

"I get nightmares too, sometimes the monster chasing me or I'm forced to watch helplessly as it goes after someone I love." Nancy shares with the group.

"I find myself staring out my window, just looking into the woods. I should be relieved at seeing nothing, but it makes me anxious." Steve looks down at his hands. Lyn notices the dark bags under his eyes. The difference between the two was that Lyn covers hers with makeup.

Jon sigh, feeling the pressure to share with the group since everyone else did. "I'm happy to have Will home, but it drives me crazy to know that the people who are responsible won't face any consequences. They're not going to be shut down or face any jail time." He spat out.

"Yeah, it's frustrating. Now, with every missing poster, I can't help but wonder." Lyn sighs. Nancy was right this was nice, to know that someone is having the same worries. It made Lyn feel like she wasn't going crazy, it made her feel normal. After what happened, she wasn't sure if she was ever going to get that feeling again.

"A little higher... oh, that's too high." Lyn instructed her brother who was putting up the welcome home banner at the Byers.

"Are you kidding me? You're being impossible right now." Dustin screams over his shoulder at her.

"I am not. Look, Lucas has his side perfect." She points to the other boy who was still standing on a chair, even though he already had his side of the banner pin to the wall.

"Yeah Dustin, be more like me." He stuck his tongue out at his friend.

"That's it I'm done." Dustin let go of the banner and jump off the chair he was on.

Lyn let out a scream as she watches the banner rip in half with one side falling while the other side was pinned up. "Dustin! You ruined the party!" She screeches.

"I did not. Will isn't going to care about a banner or any of the decorations. All he's going to care about is that we are all here." He put his hands on his hips.

"I'll take this side down and throw it all out. Will won't even know he was missing anything." Lucas unpins his side. He jumps off the chair to picks up the pieces of the banner and throw it in the trash.

"You're right. You guys are right. I need to calm down." She took deep breaths. She had been stressing about all the little details since she volunteered to plan Will a coming home party.

"These are amazing." Steve shoves a 20 side dice cookie into his mouth as he walks out of the kitchen.

"How much of those did you eat?" Lyn rushes into the kitchen, smacking Steve in the shoulder as she passes him.

"Oh man, I thought you were going to die." Dustin let out the breath that he was holding.

"I was looking forward to it." Mike pouts.

"Mike!" Nancy glared at him. He had been gaining a bad attitude lately.

"Wait, guys... do you hear that?" Dustin held his hand up to quiet everyone in the room to listen to the car engine. He and Lucas ran to peaks out the window.

"Everyone hide. They're here." Lucas yells.

Lyn ran back into the room and hide behind the couch with Mike and Lucas. Dustin hides behind an armchair. Steve and Nancy went down in the hallway. They waited until they heard the door open to jump

out and yell, "Surprise!" The boys ran over and gave Will a hug.

"Nice to see you out of that hospital bed," Lyn pulls him into a hug after the boys let go.

"I made a dungeons and dragons game for your return." Mike pulls Will over to the dining table that had the board set up.

"Oh look at him." Joyce's smile was as big as Will, watching him play his favorite game with joy in his eyes.

10. Mad Max

Lyn was making a large pink bow to go with her Marilyn Monroe costume when her brother came running into her room. "Do you have any quarters I'm going to the arcade tonight with the guys," He grabs her purse and turns it upside down, so everything fell out on the bed.

"What the hell, Dustin?" She got up and pushes him out of the way to grab her wallet off the bed. "I have 50 cents." She places the two quarters into his hand.

"Only two quarters, where the hell is all your change going?" He grabs her purse to check her side pockets.

"To the vending machine at work, be grateful." She shoves her things back into her purse.

"This is only two games." He whines.

"That two more games than most kids get." She rolls her eyes.

"Thanks for the coins. I'm going to check the couch again." He sighs.

He went to walk out of the room, but she grabs him by the back of his shirt. "Hey, what are the rules?"

"Oh come on, it's so lame Lyn. It's all common sense stuff." He whines.

"I don't care. You want to go out without me hovering over you than I want them repeated. I'll have Keith micromanage you again." She threatens.

"Don't talk to any stranger. Don't take anything from a stranger. Don't let my mouth write a check that my ass can't cash." He listed his sister's three rules.

"Remember the third one." She wiggles three fingers at him.

"What did you have to give Keith for him to do that anyway? You didn't kiss him, did you?" He gags at the thought of his sister kissing

that loser.

"No, I didn't kiss him. I didn't have to do anything. He was more than happy to annoy you for free." She giggles at his face of disbelief.

"Non-believable," He throws his hands in the air. He shook his head as he walks out of the room.

She laughs and went back to sewing the fabric together to make the bow.

She took the only parking space left that was at the end of the lot. She got out and walked her way to the entrance of the school when she was stopped in her tracks by a blue 1979 Chevrolet Camaro. She let out a low whistle as she circles the impressive muscle car.

She was once again stopped in her tracks when she found a handsome guy wearing denim on denim leaning against the passenger door, smoking a cigarette. She blushes at being caught eye fucking a car. "You like the car." He got off the door to turn towards her.

"She is a beaut. I bet she runs amazing." She put her hands behind her back to stop herself from touching the car. She hated when people touch Darling getting their fingerprints on her. Subsequently, she was pushing her chest out giving the new student quite a show.

"I'd be happy to take you for a ride sometime." He licks his lips as he eyes her curvy figure.

"That would be nice, but I doubt she could run better than my Darling." She almost felt like she was cheating by even agreeing to ride in another muscle car.

"Darling?" He arches an eyebrow.

"I got a 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle SS 454. She's over there." She points to her at the end of the lot.

He let out a low whistle. "Nice ride. What's that your daddy's car?" He licks his lips.

"She's mine." Lyn narrows her eyes. It's true that Darling used to be her dad. But, it annoyed her that this meathead thought that she couldn't handle the up keeping of her car.

"Guess, country bitches, are different than city ones." He blows a poof of smoke in her face.

"Oh yeah, we country bitches know our way around a motor, can slaughter a pig, and fuck our cousins." Lyn put on a fake southern accent. She turns on her heels and walks away from the pretentious prick.

Billy laughed, as he watches her hips sway and her ass jiggle. He decided that he liked her angry. The way her eyes would narrow and glaze over in rage. She didn't seem able to control her mouth. She would be a fun thing to tame.

He walks into the school and made his way to the office. The middle-aged woman behind the counter was easy to charm. She insisted on personal giving him a tour and taking him to his first class.

"Giving you the tours have been fun but it's time to take you to class. This is our English class, you should like it. Mr. Crane is an amazing teacher." She looks the teen up and down in appreciation one last time before opening the classroom door. All eyes were on them as they enter the room.

"Good morning, Mr. Crane. This is our new student." She giggles, handing the teacher a piece of paper. Billy winks at her when she gave him her bedroom eyes before leaving. If he ever felt desperate he would pay her a visit.

"Want to tell us your name and where you're from?" Mr. Crane gestures towards the class to him.

"My name is Billy and I'm from California." He sighs out like he was bored. His eyes meet with Lyn and a smile came over his face. He was walking over to scare the boy that was sitting next to her away when a hand grabs his wrist. He looks over to see a decent looking redhead staring up at him.

"Hi, I'm Vicki. Why don't you sit with me and my friends? We can help you catch up." She bats her eyelashes at him.

"Sure." He licks his lips making her blush. He sat down on the desk between her and another Brunette.

"Welcome to Hawkins. I'm Tina." She stuck out her hand. He raises it up to give it a kiss, turning the girl's face red.

Two students in front of him turn their seats around. "Hey, I'm Tommy and this is my girlfriend Carol." A boy covered in freckles points to himself and then to the girl next to him.

He only gave them a nod in response, which didn't seem to lessen their eagerness to get to know him. "So, what's California like?" Tina bites her bottom lip as she stares at him.

Billy chuckled, this is what he thought was going to happen, a bunch of annoying hicks falling over themselves to get to him. If he had to suffer in this shitty town, then he was going to at least be the king of it.

"Tina, don't be insensitive, maybe he doesn't want to talk about home." Vicki reaches out to squeeze his bicep when he didn't answer the other girl's question.

"Yeah and I'm sure you groping him is making him feel so much better." Tommy teases.

"It always cheers you up." Carol wink at her boyfriend.

Billy internal roll his eyes, he was done with their pathetic small talk. "Who's that?" He jerks his head toward the table of his new target.

"Oh, that's Steve Harrington. He used to be friends with us, but he got pussy whipped and..." Tommy glares at the classmate he was speaking of.

"I'm talking about the girl." Billy cut him off. He looks at Tommy like he was dumb, why the hell would he care about that idiot?

"Oh, that's Rosalyn Henderson. She was a stuck up loner. Her only

friend was her little brother until this year when she made friends with Nancy, Steve, and that creep Jonathan." Vicki insults the girl. It was clear to see that she caught the new boy's eye and Vicki felt jealous.

"Just because the cow got the biggest utters in school some boys fancy her their dream girl." Carol glares at her boyfriend.

"I mutter her name once in my sleep Carol, let it go." Tommy matches his girlfriend's glare.

"Please, Tommy you eye fuck her every chance you get since you used stopping her from attacking Steve as an excuse to feel her up." She hisses in his face.

"We been over this a hundred times, I was holding her back not feeling her up." He growls.

"She attacked Steve? The same Steve that sitting by her," Billy stop the couple's argument that was about to give him a headache.

"Yeah, it's the same asshole. Fucking bastard, ditch us like we were holding him back. We made him popular. We made him King Steve. He makes like he doesn't need us." Tommy grits his teeth. Billy raised an eyebrow, this guy sounded like a heartbroken girl who just got cheated on. "Think cause he got two girlfriends he better than us." He sneers.

"What are you saying Tommy, that he sleeping with both of them?" Carol seems to have forgotten about the argument she was having moments ago with him to indulge in a juicy rumor.

"Come on, Carol, you really think Steve some good guy now? That he's so in love with Nancy that he's okay with being just friends with a girl he spent three years pining over?" He scoffed.

"You're right, he definitely sleeping with both of them." She looks to the other girls for them to nod in agreement with her. Of course, they did eagerly.

Billy looks Steve up and down. He didn't see anything impressive about the guy. He watches as the two interact with each other, there

was definitely something there. With a rival for the title of king of the school and the pussy he wanted, things were about to get more interesting for him in Hawkins.

"Today, I figure I give you guy's time to your essay for Heart of Darkness. If you're finished with that you can work on something for another class or college applications. If you need any help, just call me over." Mr. Crane spoke to the class.

"Did you finish your essay?" Steve asked from the seat next to her. In the year, Lyn had become good friends with Nancy, Steve, and Jonathan. They all bond over shared trauma, well everyone but Steve and Jonathan. Lyn suspected that had to do with Jonathan's feelings for Nancy.

She was surprised how well she got along with Steve. They share the same taste in movies and music. She especially had fun bickering with him over a variety of topics, until Nancy step in and let one of them know they took it too far. She was happy to have someone to grumble about senior problems with.

"Yeah, I finish it early, so I could concentrate on my costume." She pulls out The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison from her backpack.

"How about instead of reading that, you read this." He took her book from her and put his admission essay in her hand.

"Such a hard choice, a literary masterpiece or dribble," Lyn bites her bottom lip like she was thinking hard about it.

"You didn't even read it, how do you know it's dribble?" He put his hand on his chest, acting like he was offended.

"Just going off the reputation of the author," She smirks.

"Hardy Har Har," He stuck his tongue out at her.

The door opening made everyone look towards the door. The jerk covered in denim came in with a blushing office lady behind him. "Good morning, Mr. Crane. This is our new student." She giggles, handing the teacher a piece of paper. She shot the boy younger

enough to be her son a flirty smile before she left the room.

"Want to tell us your name and where you're from?" Mr. Crane gestures towards the class to him.

"My name is Billy and I'm from California." He sighs out like he was bored. Lyn held her breath when they made eye contact. She did not want him to sit by her. There weren't even any available seats, so she was confused when he started walking in her direction. She was relieved when Vicky grabs his hand.

Steve and Lyn watch as the new guy sat down with Tina and Vicky. Lyn snicker when she saw how fast Carol and Tommy turn their chairs to face them. "Looks like Tommy getting a new boyfriend, maybe now he'll leave you alone."

"Stop implying that he's my ex, but hopefully he does. It's hard not to punch him in the face every time he makes a stupid comment when he walks past me." He spat out.

"Let's look at this essay." She read through the paper in front of her. When she was done, she looks up at him through narrow eyes, "Steve, what the fuck is this? It's like you put two essays together and didn't even try to relate them."

"What am I going to do? This is due tomorrow." He groans running a hand through his hair.

"You just have to pick one idea and flesh it out. What the topic of this essay?" She draws a red line between the paragraphs about the basketball game and grandpa's war stories.

"About a challenge I faced." He told her.

"Then why the hell are you writing about your grandpa going to war." She cocks an eyebrow at him.

"I was saying I draw inspiration from those stories to help me wins that game." He points out the one muddy transition sentence.

"Let's not compare a basketball game to a world war." She shook her head.

"Then, what the hell do I write about?" He grumbles.

"Steve, you went from sitting on the bench to the team captain. You can talk about the long practices, all the work you put in on your own, and the love of the sport. Then you can go to writing about leading a team and having to constantly better yourself." She counts the topic he could cover with her fingers.

"Those are good ideas." He stares at her as if she gave him the path to world peace.

"Oh, you think so. Well, write them down. I don't speak for my health." She held out a pen to him. He was quick to take it and jot down her ideas.

"This opening paragraph of yours should actually be your closing. It is a tidy end for the buildup. Bench-warming to MVP in the Championship Game, oh that should be your title." She wrote it down on the top of the paper. "You're going to have to pull an all-nighter to get this done by tomorrow." She looks over at her stress out friend.

"I wish I could, but I have to go to Barbara's parent's house for dinner." He whines.

"Again, weren't you there like two weeks ago?" She started an outline for Steve's essay.

"Nancy wants them to know that someone cares." He sighs, rubbing his temples.

"I'm sure she would understand if you miss the dinner to get this essay done." She shrugs. They were having dinner with the Hollands every other week, what would be the harm in Steve missing one dinner, especially since he didn't even know Barb.

"Somehow I doubt that, do you want to go in my place?" He put his hands together in a praying position.

"No thank you, she didn't disappear in my yard." She shook her head and waves her hand in his face.

"Don't remind me, it so creepy thinking that thing was so close." He

whispers the last part to her.

"I don't know how you and Nancy do it. I wouldn't be able to sit there and listen to them talk about finding Barb when we know they won't." She leaned in to whisper back to him. They were sore to secretive by the government and told that bad things would happen to them and anyone else who found out.

"Hey, love birds. You're so cute whispering to each other. Come to my party tomorrow." Tina startled them as she put down two orange flyers in front of them. Before either could dispute what she said, she turns around to pass out her flyers to everyone else.

"Come get sheet faced. Cute," Lyn rolls her eyes at the cartoon ghost next to the pun.

"Are you going? Nancy and I are. We're going as Joel and Lana from Risky Business." Steve put the flyer in his pocket.

"Please say you'll be wearing pants." She giggled at the thought of Steve in a dress shirt, boxers, and long socks dancing around.

"I will be, but hopefully not when the night is done." He winks at her. She laughs and slaps him in the arm. "So, you coming or what?" He asks her again.

"I might as well, I already have my costume ready and Dustin probably won't want me to come with him trick or treating this year. He doesn't want to do anything with me anymore." She whines. It was so depressing, how lately Dustin made it a point to leave her out of things after all those years of him wanted her to come everywhere with him.

"Lyn, he's 13. It would be concerning if he was clinging to his older sister. He supposes to be hanging out with his friend while they pick up chicks." He snorted at her pouting face.

"Don't say that. He's not picking up girls." She punches his arm repeatedly. Steve laughs and shoved her off of him.

But, she would have preferred him trying to pick a girl up if she knew that her brother and his friend were planning on stalking a girl they

found interesting.

11. Trick or Treat, Freak

"YOU LOOK SO CUTE!" Rosalyn and her mother were gushing in glee as they stare at Dustin in his ghostbuster costume.

"Oh, I want to see those pearls." Claudia held the camera up to take pictures of her son. When he smiles, she screams, yes. "Who gonna call?" She sang as she kept taking pictures.

"Dusty, you and the guys are going to be the hit of the school." Lyn bounces on her heels at how cute he looked. "We have to get a picture of all of them together before they go trick or treating tonight." She turns to her mother.

"Oh my god, yes that will be so cute. I will save some film." Claudia lowers the camera to stop taking pictures.

"I got to meet the guys." Dustin slowly edges towards the door.

"Okay, see you, honey." His mom waves to him as he walks out of the house. "Why aren't you wearing your costume to school?" She turns to her daughter.

"Mom only little kids do that." Lyn shook her head.

"But, you are going to dress up for that party?" She tilts her head, not understanding teenager logic.

"Don't worry. I let you take loads of pictures before I leave for the party. I love you." She gave her mom a kiss on the cheek and pat Meows on the head.

"I love you too. Have a good day at school." Her mom calls out to her. Lyn grabs her backpack and keys before walking out the door.

"Are you going to this Halloween party?" Billy leans against the locker beside Lyn's.

"Might as well." She shrugs, not even looking at him. She was trading her chemistry textbook for her history textbook.

"I get what you mean; there isn't much to do in this hick town." He put his fists in his jacket and cracks his neck. He was trying to control his temper at this broad not looking at him when he was talking to her. "So you got a date for this thing." He licks his lips.

Lyn closes her locker and turns to face him. "You're new in town, so I'll fill you in. Tina's party isn't like prom. It's more like a night club. You don't go there with a date, you leave with one." "You speak from experience." He was able to relax now that his target's eyes were on him.

"Not personally, but I've been to enough of them for the free booze." She informed him. She didn't want him thinking that she was easy to take to bed. She didn't have anything against girls who were, but they had to put up with jerks who thought they had a right to them. Just looking at Billy let her know that he was that type of jerk.

"You'll save me dance then." He demands.

"Sure." She shrugs. With her Marilyn Monroe wig, she wouldn't be easy to spot in the crowd of teens dressed in costumes.

"Let's get to class." He yanked her bag from her and throws it over his shoulder. He wraps an arm around her waist and led her to their history class. That was the thing about going to school in a small town; you end up sharing a lot of classes with people you don't like.

If it wasn't for Carol glaring at her from down the hall, Lyn would remove his arm from her. Since she was glaring, Lyn shot Carol a smug look and move closer, so her side as push up against Billy's. For Lyn, there was no better way to start the school day then pissing up Carol.

The soundtrack for Gentleman Prefers Blondes was on the record play. The song Diamonds Are a Girl Best Friend was playing as Lyn applied her makeup. She gave herself rosy cheeks and red lips. She applied pink and white eyeshadow and went a little heavy on the mascara.

Lyn slips on her long strapless pink dress that had a large bow on the

back right above her butt. She slips on a pair of silk pink gloves that went up to her armpits. She put on her costume jewelry even if she had the real stuff she wouldn't wear it to one of Tina's wild parties. She put on matching 'diamond' earrings, a choker, and large clunky bracelets on each wrist. She slips on her black open toe high heels. She already had her hair pin-up and the wig cap on, so lastly she carefully put on the short curly blonde wig that was style like Marilyn's hair was in the movie.

She made her way to the living room where her mom was waiting for her. "Oh my god, you look so beautiful. My baby girl is all grown up." She tears up.

"Thank you mom," She smiles.

"Alright, Ms. Monroe light, camera, action." She held the camera up. Lyn put on her hips with a pout on her lips for her first pose then she blows a kiss at the camera. For her last pose, she put both her hands above her head. "My baby a natural," She praises.

"Oh stop." Lyn waves her hand in a mocking shameful way.

"Before you leave, I have something to give you." Claudia puts the camera down on the counter and pulls a condom out from her purse.

"Mom," Lyn screams out of embarrassment. "Why are you giving me this? It's not like this is my first party."

"I know, but this is the first party you been too with boys you are close too." Claudia waves the condom in her face.

"What are you talking about mom?" Lyn took a step back from her mother.

"Steve and Jon," She said like it was obvious.

"No mom, no. Steve is Nancy's boyfriend and Jonathan is Jonathan." She shook her head.

"Please, I know you think I'm naive but I see the way Steve looks at you. I've also seen the way Jon looks at Nancy." Lyn's jaw drops, not knowing that her mom was taking that much notice to them.

"Mom, if I take the condom will you stop talking." She took the condom from her hand.

"Do you know how to use it?" Claudia asks.

"I'll figure it out. Bye mom," Lyn ran out of the house as fast as she could in her heels. She took the car keys out from in between her boobs and got into Darling. She put the condom in the glove department and drove to Tina's house.

Lyn was smiling when she got close parking despite the fact that she showed up when the party was already in full swing. She got out of the car and looks up to the sky, "Praise Marilyn!"

She walks into the house to make her way to the kitchen where she assumes the alcohol would be. She was right there was a stack of red cups next to a bowl of spiked punch that had a vodka bottle next to it. She fills up a cup with the punch and took a sip before pouring some more vodka in it. If she ends up having to sleep in her car because she was too drunk to drive, so be it.

She took sips from her cup as she went looking for Steve and Nancy. She found them standing up against the wall. "Hello, Lana and Joel," She smiles at them.

"Well hello, Miss Monroe. I didn't recognize you for a second, Lyn." Steve laughs.

"The name's Lorelei Lee." She introduces herself as the character.

"Your costume is amazing, Lyn." Nancy smiled at her, but Lyn notices it didn't quite meet her eyes. But, Lyn expects she would be like this. She was always depressed the day after having dinner with the Holland's.

"So is yours, you look exactly like Lana." She complimented her back. Nancy had it down from the hair to the shoes.

"What about me?" Steve puff out his chest.

She looked him up and down. He was wearing a black sport coat with a black shirt underneath, jeans, and black ray bane. It was what Tom

Cruise wore in the movie, but it was a common outfit for guys. "You should keep the glasses on and stick close to Nancy," Lyn told him. Steve pouted while Nancy laughed.

Their mood was brought back down when they heard the chants of Billy coming from outside. The man of the hour came through the backdoor wearing a leather jacket with no shirt underneath, a tight pair of jeans, and fingerless gloves. He seems happy to dancing his way through the crowd until he saw their little group. With a cigarette in his mouth, he quickly made his way to them. Tommy wearing a Cobra Kai Dojo costume and some other drunken idiot was right behind him.

Billy stood in front of them and stares down Steve like he was ready to fight. "We got ourselves a new Keg King, Harrington." Tommy slaps Billy on the back and gave Steve a cocky smile.

"Yeah, eat it, Harrington!" The drunken idiot laughs in his face.

Steve, who was never one to back down from a fight, took his ray ban off to match Billy's glare. Nancy rolls her eyes and walks away. Lyn pushes Steve in the direction Nancy went. "Don't worry about these idiots, go get your girl." Steve glared at the guys for a second longer before going after his girlfriend.

Lyn went to follow him when Billy wraps his hand around her silk cover arm to pull her back. "Don't you owe me a dance?" He whispers into her ear.

She looks at his abs and chest. One dance wouldn't be so bad. "Let's get this over with." She rolls her eyes and made her way into the crowd of dancing teenagers. Billy was right behind her, his friends slapping him on the back.

It wasn't too bad dancing with Billy. The music was too loud for her to hear anything he was saying. She was enjoying dancing against his rock hard body. Although, she could do without Tommy and his idiot pals whistling and leering at them or the drunken girls that kept trying to shove her away. If it wasn't for Billy holding onto her hips, she would have fallen over a couple of times.

Lyn was giggling as Billy twirls her around. The crowd screams of ohs and gasp put a stop to everyone partying. Lyn turns around to see that Nancy's shirt was covered in red punch and Steve with a face full of regret. "What the hell?" Nancy yells at him before storming off. Steve follows her calling her name.

Lyn went to go after them, but Billy wraps an arm around her waist to pull her back against his chest. "Don't worry, they'll work it out." He began to leave a trail of kisses along her shoulder to her neck.

Having had a few drinks that were more vodka than punch Lyn leans into his touch. He grabs the empty red cup from her hand. "Get her a refill." He held the cup out to the group of guys who were enjoying kissing his ass. Of course, Tommy was quick to jump up and do as he was told.

Lyn turns around so she was facing him and whisper in his ears. "I think he gets off on being someone's bitch."

"That would explain his bossy bitch of a girlfriend." Billy chuckled.

Lyn laid her head on his shoulder as she giggled. She stares at his neck that was right in front of her. It all of a sudden looking very tempting to her, she leans in and began nibbling and sucking on his neck. "Fuck." He moans out and his grip on her hips tighten. He grabs her chin and pulls her off him. She smirks at the dark hickey she left on his neck. He tilts her head up and pushes his mouth on hers. He tasted like alcohol and cigarettes, but Lyn still found herself enjoying the hot, wet, sloppy kiss. She wraps her arms around his neck to tug on his mullet, making him give her a slap on the ass.

Lyn let out a yip of surprises when she was being pulled off Billy. "Jonathan." She throws her arms around her friend.

"I need you to check on Nancy. Steve just storms out of the bathroom and out the door." He wonders if he was getting through to her as she stares up at him with glassy eyes.

Billy pulls Lyn back to his side. "Look, man, you want to check on that bitch, do it yourself?" He glared at the other boy.

"Yeah, Byers don't worry about her. There a lot of other girls who like taking pictures." Tommy smirks.

"I'll check on Nance." Lyn slur as she slips out of Billy's arms. She made her way to the bathroom. Jonathan ran after her to stop her from stumbling into anything. Rosalyn walks into the bathroom to see Nancy scrubbing her shirt aggressively, but the red wasn't going away. "Are you alright, Nancy?" Lyn asks, eyeing her friend with concern.

"No, I'm not alright and you're a hypocrite." Nancy literally growls at her.

"Okay Nancy, let go home you're wasted and you're not a nice drunk." She reaches to grab her arm.

"No, you're a hypocritical bitch. All last year you were mad at everyone for not caring about Will. You said that everyone was only fake caring. But, look at you now. You don't even fake care about Barbara, you bitch." She shoves Lyn into the wall behind her.

The pain of her back hitting the wall seems to sober her up. "I don't argue with drunks, now let's get you home. You can sleep this off and we'll talk about this like grown-ups in the morning." She hissed grab her arm with more force than needed and drag her out of the bathroom.

Jon was leaning against the wall by the bathroom waiting for them. "Is she okay?" He eyes Nancy drunk state with concern.

"Just get her home. She's a nasty drunk." She pushes the wasted girl into Jon's arm. He held her like he wasn't sure what to do with her. "Take her home." She repeats slowly. He nodded his head and carried the girl out.

Lyn looks over at Billy and saw him grinding with Vicki. She decides to look for Steve. She went outside to see if his car was there. "Uh, there it is." She walks over to the BMW. She got into the passenger seat. Steve looks over at her with red eyes. "You're crying." She felt herself tearing up. Maybe Nancy didn't sober her up completely.

"I'm not crying." He wipes his eyes.

"Whatever Nancy said, she doesn't mean. She called me a hypocritical bitch." Despite the words she was saying, she let out a happy sigh as she leans into the cold leather seat. It felt amazing on her hot skin.

"She said that it's like we are in love. That everything about us is bullshit." Steve stared at the steering wheel.

"She's drunk and upset about Barb. She doesn't mean it. I'm drunk and I made out with Billy. I didn't mean that." She hums thinking about the kiss. She would regret it tomorrow, but she sure did enjoy it.

"You made out with Billy." He gasps horrified.

"We should ditch this party. We can go to my house, eat some ice cream and watch scary movies." Lyn bounce in her seat.

"I'm not a girl. I don't eat ice cream and cry my eyes out when I get my heartbroken." Steve rolls his eyes.

"I know, that is why we are watching scary movies. They're very manly." She beams with pride for taking him being a male into factor.

Lyn walks into the dark house with Steve behind her. "You sit on the couch. I'll go change." She points to the living room. She went into her room to change out of her costume and into some cotton shorts and a wife-beater. She took off her wig and the cap. She walks to the kitchen to grab two cartons of ice cream and two spoons.

"Do you want rocky road or Neapolitan?" She walks into the living room to ask Steve.

"We can share both." He told her.

"Oh, good idea," She put both cartons and spoons down on the table. She went to put in the Friday the 13th VSH tape. Steve picked up the rocky road as he stares at her hair all pinned up. He wonders how long it took her to do that to her hip-length hair.

Lyn sat down on the couch next to Steve and put a spoon full of strawberry ice cream in her mouth before beginning to take out the hair barrettes. "Oh, let me help," He put down the carton to help her let down her hair.

They were able to get them all out during the commercials. "The movies starting," Lyn grabs the two cartons. She put the rocky road in his lap and the Neapolitan in hers. She leans into his sides as the movie started.

12. The Pollywog

Lyn groans, holding her head as she sat up. "Oh thank god," She pops the two Advil pills that were on the table in her mouth and wash it down with the glass of water that was next to it. She picks up the napkin the glass was on, it read thanks for the fun night, Steve.

"You know Steve is Nancy's boyfriend," Dustin said after reading the napkin over her shoulder. Lyn screams, jumping off the couch in fright. "It wasn't like that. Steve and Nancy had a fight." She put a hand over her speeding heart.

"So what, you were he's rebound booty." Dustin raises an eyebrow at her.

"No, we just watch movies and ate ice cream to get his mind off it." She put her hands on her hips.

He went into the kitchen and opens the freezers. "You guys eat all the ice cream!" He screams out.

"How are you madder about us eating all the ice cream, then when you thought we were sleeping together?" She rolls her eyes.

"I knew you guys didn't sleep together. I came home to you guys past out on the couch while the Halloween credits played." He told her. "Now, come on I got to show you what I found in our trash can." He grabs her wrist and pulls her to his room.

"Ew, what is it, a roach, a baby raccoon. Throw it out." She screeches as he drags in front of the terrarium that was in his room. "What the hell is that?" She squinted at the small slug-like creature that had two little arms with webbed paws.

"I don't know. I'm going to go to the library today to research. If it's a new animal, then I can name the species. I'm going to name him D'Artagnan. I'll call him Dart for short." He told her.

"Wait, where is Yrtle?" She looks around to see that the tortoise was on the ground. "You can't throw him out of his home, because you

found a new interesting pet." She scolds him.

"Yurtle can survive outside the tank and he won't escape. Dart needs the tank. He doesn't like the heat light, but he could escape." He reasons.

"Um, you don't know anything about it. You should turn it over to professionals. It could be poisonous." She stares at the unknown creatures, looking for any signs of danger.

"I held it last night. It didn't try to bite me and I'm not dead." He held his hand up, palm facing her as if that proves something.

"Do you know what it eats? It's going to die in your care." She tried to reason with him.

"He loves Three Musketeers." Dustin flashes his new teeth at her. He was beaming with so much pride that Lyn didn't have it in her to tell him that the slug would need more to eat than that. It wasn't like you could have nugget in the wild. She decides to sneak in the food that it would really need later.

"Alright, I won't tell mom about him." She promised.

"Cool, besides he's safer here than out there with that crazy blue car speeding down the streets. He almost ran me over yesterday." He hums happily, opening the lid to drop more candy into the tank.

"What? A Blue Car?" Lyn went into the living room to grab a car magazine. She flips through the pages as she went back to Dustin's room. "This car," She points to the Camaro that was the same model as Billy's.

"Yeah, that's it. Do you know him?" Dustin nods his head.

"That stuck up Cali bastard." She growls and balls up the magazine in her hands.

"California? Is he Max's brother? She was in the car with him." Dustin was interested to get more information on the girl he liked.

"I don't know if he has a sister, but he will pay." She hisses.

"Don't do anything crazy? The guy seems like a psycho. He swerved at the very last second." He told her.

"Don't worry. I will handle it on a proper lady." She smiles down at her brother, reassuring him that she wasn't going to go crazy. "I'm got to see if Mom will drive me to Tina to pick up my car." She walks out of the room to find her mother.

She charges through the school halls looking for the mullet asshole. She found him with Tommy, Carol, and a pack of other girls. She pushes her away through the females who all squawked angrily. "Hey prude, I heard you finally took the stick out of your ass and let one in your cunt." Tommy stood in front of Billy to laugh in her face.

She balls up her fist and gave him a right hook to the temple, knocking him out cold. She smirks at the sound from his body hitting the floor. She stepped over him to grab Billy by the collar and pull him down so he was face to face with her. "You played chicken yesterday with four boys riding their bikes. Those boys are my cubs. If I even hear about you looking at them you'll find out how a mama bear mauls their victims." She pushes him back so he would slam against the lockers. "And don't be lying to people that I slept with you. I would never touch anything with a mullet." She points a finger in his face.

Billy grits his teeth as he glares at Lyn's back as she walks away. This time the girls move out her away. It took everything in him, not to backhand her. If it wasn't for them being on school ground he would have. Who did she think she was telling him what to do?

"Tommy, Tommy." Carol shook her boyfriend.

"I have seen this in a movie." Vicki opens her water bottle and pours it on his face.

"Should we give him CPR?" Tina gasps.

"He's fine." Billy rolls his eyes. He knelt down and gave him a few rough pats on the cheek.

"What happened?" The boy opens his eyes.

"You got knocked out by a girl." He smiled smugly at the teen that annoyed him. If Tommy didn't kiss Billy's ass so much then he wouldn't even bother with him.

Lyn and Steve were sitting on the bleacher around the track and field. They were sharing the turkey Swiss cheese pinwheels and chips that Claudia made for her daughter. "So she couldn't say it at all?" She felt bad when Steve told her about Nancy interrupting his PE class to yell at him for not picking her up. She didn't remember anything from last night and couldn't tell Steve that she loves him.

"No, she just stood there staring at me." He grabs a Doritos from the bag.

"She didn't even apologize for last night? She had to know she did something wrong when you didn't pick her up this morning." Nancy was normally a good manner considerate person, so Lyn didn't understand why she was being so cruel to her boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend. The way they left it was confusing. More reason that she should be there trying to fix it.

"No, when she pulled me out of the gym, she was ready to tell me off for not picking her up this morning. When I told her what happened last night, she made like everything should be swept under the rug because she was drunk." He glares down at the pinwheel in his hand before taking a bite. "Now that I think back to it I always said I love you first and most of the time she would say me too. I feel like such an idiot. I change my whole life around for her. I use to be King Steve." He grumbled.

"Do you miss being King Steve?" She grabs a chip and pops it into her mouth.

"I just miss not being fuck with by idiots like Tommy and Billy. The girls constantly hitting on me were nice too." He shrugs. Honestly, he didn't miss his old life. He likes having Nancy as a girlfriend and Lyn as his best friend. But, it sucked to think that the girl he gave everything up for didn't even love him.

"If it means anything I like commoner Steve better than King Steve, that guy was an asshole." Lyn stretches the last word out.

"Yeah, I know. You wouldn't even give him the time of day." He chuckled. Lyn laughs along with him, it was true last year she uses to avoid making eye contact with him. Now, she was having lunch with him while listening to his relationship problems. "What would you do if you were me?" He asks after the laughter died down.

"Don't do this to me? Nancy is my friend too." Lyn shook her head.

"Come on. Please, I need some type of advice right now. You're all I got." Steve pouts.

"What the point of advice? People say they want it when their unease about what they want to do in hopes that someone will make them feel better about it. But, even when they get advice that doesn't line up with their thoughts they do what they want anyway." Lyn rants and then shove a pinwheel in her mouth.

"Are you trying to talk me out of asking you for advice?" He raises an eyebrow. She shrugs while nodding her head since her mouth was full. "It didn't work. I still want your advice." He laughs at the way she glares at him while she swallows the food.

She let out a big sigh before giving her opinion, "If I was dating someone for a year and they couldn't tell me they love me, I would break up with them."

"Just like that?" He was shocked. How could she walk away from someone after so long?

"As hard as it is to hear, I think if someone doesn't love you within a year, they're never going to. I wouldn't want to waste any more of my time." Lyn felt bad for being honest. Steve had his head down with tears in his eyes. "It's not hers or your fault. You can't control who you do or don't fall in love with." She reaches out to give his shoulder a squeeze.

"That makes me feel so much better." Steve let out a bitter laugh.

"It's not like you have to follow my advice. You need to talk to Nancy.

Maybe it's hard for her to say those words. This is her first relationship." It made Lyn's heartache to see Steve sad.

"I got to think about this. Thanks for lunch." He got up and walk down the bleacher. She watches him in pity until he was out of sight. Steve deserves to be with someone who didn't have to think about it before they said they loved him.

Lyn was sitting on Darling's hood as she waited for Dustin to bring Dart to her so that she could take his pet home while he hangs out with the party.

Billy and Vicki were lean against his car as he smokes a cigarette. "So, is your sister coming or what?" Vicki asked making Lyn turn her head towards them.

"If your sister is Max, then I'll take her home." Lyn offers. She wanted to meet Dustin's new friend anyways.

"How do you know Max?" Billy glares at the girl. Max never mentioned meeting any older girl. Not, that she told him about her day, but he thought the little bitch could have at least mention the curvy girl he was trying to get between the sheets. He needs any leverage he could get now that he was on her bad side.

"She's friends with my brother," Lyn told him.

"I don't care that little shit can skate home." Billy throws his cigarette on the ground and walks around to the driver's side. Lyn roll her eyes if he didn't care then why did he ask.

"Don't call her my sister, she's not my sister." He yells at both girls before getting in the car. Vicki was quick to get in the passenger seat.

Lyn watch as he speeds out of the parking lot. She got up made her way to the middle school. She walks to the AV room to see a redhead girl using a paper clip to try breaking in. "What are you doing?" Lyn asks making the redhead jump.

"Nothing." She put the hand with the paper clip behind her back.

"Are you Max?" Lyn smiles down at the girl.

"Depends who asking," She shrugs, giving a fake smile to the girl that she was hoping to get rid of.

"I'm Rosalyn Henderson. I'm Dustin's older sister." Lyn crosses her arms over her chest.

"Oh, Dustin's in there but he locked us out." She points to the door.

"I don't think it was us. It was you." Lyn smirks before knocking on the door. "Dustin, its Lyn!" She yelled.

"In a second," Dustin yells back through the door.

"Now it's us," Max smirks at her before she went back to trying to break in using the paper clip. Lyn leans against the wall beside the door, waiting to see how long it would take her.

Max let out a little cheer when she got the door open. Lyn got off the wall when Max screams and jumps out of the way of a frog with a slug head. The freaky creature that was too big to be Dart ran out of the room. "What the fuck?" Lyn snaps.

The boys came running out of the room to slam into Max and they fell on the ground. "Where'd he go?" Mike was the first to get up.

"What was that?" Max stood up.

"Dart!" Mike glares at her.

Not waiting for any more information Lyn ran in the direction she saw it go down. "DART! DART! DART!" She yells as she ran down the hall. She wasn't sure why she was calling for it. The thing probably didn't know its name.

She was going in and out of classrooms trying to find the thing. She remembered how Dustin said he like the cold, so she went to look in the girl's bathroom. She came out when she found nothing there.

Will was walking past her. "Will, can you check the boy's bathroom? Dustin said it like cold damp places." She asks him.

"Um, sure," Will nod and slowly walk in there. "He's here." He yells out to the older teen. Lyn walks in to see it hissing at them as it tried to hide behind a toilet. "Guy, I found him," Will spoke into the walkie.

"Where?" Dustin sounds frantic.

"In the bathroom by Mr. Salerno's," Will tell them.

"Copy that." Lucas's voice came over the radio.

"It's okay. I'm not going to hurt you." Will speaks softly. Dart came out from behind the toilet to hiss at him. Will drop the walkie talkie and ran out.

"Will!" Lyn yells. She wasn't sure if she should go see if Will was alright or keep an eye on the Dart. The odd thing was when Will left, Dart settles down and went back to relaxing on the cold tile.

"Where is he?" Dustin came running in.

"He's in there." She points to the last stall.

"Hey, buddy. Come here. You know I won't hurt you." Dustin bent down and held out his hands. Dart ran into his hands. "It's okay. It's just me and Lyn. We won't hurt you." He told Dart when he started to look around.

"We're coming!" Mike yell from outside as loud footsteps could be heard.

"Stay low. Keep quiet." He put Dart on top of his head and put his hat over him. "Don't tell them we found Dart, they want to kill him." He orders his older sister.

"Why would they do that?" Lyn raises her eyebrows.

"They think he's a part of the upside-down, but he's not. He doesn't even look like those things." Dustin tries to keep as still as possible.

"Alright, I won't say anything." She nods her head. The thing grew triple the size it was this morning, but she could still kill it if

necessary.

"Where's Dart?" Mike came running in with Lucas and Max behind him.

"I don't know. Not here." Dustin shrugs.

"What?" Mike gasp.

"He said by Salerno's, right?" Max asked, thinking they must have heard wrong.

"Yeah, maybe Will has him." Dustin wants to get them out, so he could pass Dart to his sister and she could take him home.

"Where is Will?" Mike looked around for his friend.

"He isn't outside," Lyn asks. She didn't think that he would run far.

"No." Lucas shook his head.

"He ran out when I came in here." Lyn ran outside with the group following her.

13. Will the Wise

Lyn was running around the school screaming Will's name with Dustin and Max behind her. "Dustin! Rosalyn!" Ms. Byers ran towards them.

"Ms. Byers?" The Henderson siblings look confused as to why she was there.

"What's going on? Where's Will?" She asks them. They look at each other, not knowing how to tell the mother that they didn't know where her son was.

Luckily for them, Lucas ran inside. "The field!" He yells at them before running back out. They follow him. In the field, they found Will standing there with his eyes almost closed.

Mike was standing next to him trying to wake him up. "I found him like this! I think he's having another episode!" He gave him a shake to show us that he wasn't responding.

"Will! Will! Will! Sweetie, wake up! It's Mom! Will! Will, wake up! Can you hear me? Will, please, wake up." His mother shook him gently as she begs. Lyn looks up at the sky and took a deep breath to stop herself from crying.

Will took a deep breath of his own as his eyes snap open. "Oh Will honey, are you okay?" Joyce hugs him.

"I'm fine." He said in an exhausted tone.

"Let's get you home." She guides him back into the school. His friends follow behind through the school to the parking lot. They stop on the steps and watch as Ms. Byers guides her son into the car.

"Okay, that totally freaked me out. Did that not freak you guys out?" Max looks them over. While she was frightened, they were concerned.

"Two episodes in two days," Lucas sighs.

"It's getting worse." Mike kept his eyes on the car.

"You think it's True Sight?" Lucas asked, making them all turn their sights on him. Lyn tense up at the thought. If it wasn't PTSD, if it was true sight, it would mean that the Upside Down was intertwining with their world more than they already were. That was a world Lyn wasn't sure if she was ready for, she wasn't sure if anyone was ready for it. Not even those scientists that thought they had it all under control.

"What's True Sight?" Max asks.

"It's nothing." Lucas shook his head. He looks back to the Byers car that was driving out of the parking lot.

"Come on, Max. I told your brother I would take you home." Lyn nod to the girl.

"Billy?" She looks surprised that the older teen was friends with him.

"You got another brother?" Lyn raises an eyebrow.

"No, just the step," She hummed. "You don't have to take me home, I can always skate." She shook the skateboard in her hand.

"I'll take you home. Half of these roads don't have sideways. Any of you boys want a ride home?" She told the girl before turning to the boys.

"No, we're going to Mike's house. We'll probably make a dungeons and dragons game for Will. Those always cheer him up." Lucas told her.

"Can you take home my ghost trap?" Dustin asks. He knew that he couldn't hide Dart under his hat all night.

"Sure." She nods. Dustin ran back inside to grab his prop from the AV room.

After a few minutes, he came back out and hand it to her gently. "Be careful, I took me a long time to make." He winks at her.

Lyn shook her head, wondering how he kept any secrets. "I'll see you, boys, later." She nods to them and walks to her car with Max following her. She put the ghost trap on the backseat and got into the driver's seat. Max got into the passengers.

"Where do you live?" Lyn asks the girl, so she would know which way to turn when she pulls out of the lot.

"Old Cherry Road," Max told her. Lyn nods as she pulls out of the parking spot and got on the road. "So, you're friends with Billy?" She asks, still finding it hard to believe. She didn't know the older girl well, but she didn't seem like the type to put up with her stepbrother's crap.

"I wouldn't say we're friends. He was parked next to me and his date was grumbling about waiting for you. So, I offered to drive you home. Figure you would rather ride with almost stranger than that jerk and ditz." Lyn smile when she got a laugh out of Max.

"It's pretty miserable listening to those girls kisses his ass. But, it's better when they're there." She said before she could stop herself.

"Does he hurt you?" Lyn grip tightens around the steering wheel.

"No, why would you ask that?" Max looks down at her lap as she pulls on her sleeves.

"He's so aggressive about everything. He seems quick to turn to violence." She looks at the road, not wanting to scare Max off by seem too emotional about the subject. She knew a lot of time victims will protect their abuser, especially when their family.

Max stay silence for a long time before she clears her throat. "He's all hot air." She weakly shrugs to try to make like she wasn't afraid of him.

"If it turns into anything more, let me know. I know the sheriff." Lyn turns on Old Cherry road. "Now, which house is yours?"

"The white house," She points to a cute house that had a bush with pink flowers on the side of the porch. Lyn parks in front of the house. "Thanks for the ride." She smiles at the driver.

"No problem. I'll see you later kid." She waves at the younger teen as she got out of the car. Lyn waits until Max made her way into the house before she reaches back and grabs the ghost trap. Dart move around making the thing shake. Lyn was about to push the button to open it when there was a knock on the window, startling her.

She twirls around to see an older brown-haired man with a mustache smiling at her. Billy was standing behind him. Lyn rolls down her window and smiles politely at the man. "Hello, Mr. Hargrove, I assume."

"Smart as well as helpful and beautiful," He smiles back at the girl before turning around to growl at his son. "Billy, this is the type of girl you should be dating instead of those bimbo skanks you keep around."

"Sh-She was my d-date on Halloween." Billy blurted out. Lyn tilts her head, she never heard Billy stutter his words or look vulnerable before.

"Is it true?" Mr. Hargrove turns back to her.

"Yeah, he was the James Dean to my Marilyn Monroe." She lied for him. She might hate Billy, but she still felt pity for him. This was obviously the monster behind the monster.

"Oh, that's who you were I thought you were going as a fag." He looks back at his son laughing. His slur made Lyn's eye twitch. She took a deep breath to calm herself when he turns back to her. "You're okay with him dating all those other sluts?"

Lyn held back her snarl at him applying that she was a slut. "I understand that he wants to date around before settling down. I like that he honestly with me. Most guys would pretend to go steady and then cheat on me. Billy's different." She looks behind the older man to give Billy a smile to really sell it. The boy looked relieved.

"Well, I came out here to thank you for driving my daughter home." He pats the side of Darling.

"It's was no problem. I enjoy Max's company." She told the man the

truth for the first time.

"We need to have you over for dinner one night." Lyn saw where Billy got the habit of demanding instead of asking.

"I would love too." Her cheeks were starting to hurt from smiling for so long.

"I'll see you later then." He turns around to walk inside.

Billy walked over to her window. "I wish I knew you were into open relationship. I would have made you my main girl early." He smirks, leaning into her window.

"You play nice. I did you a favor despite you almost running over my brother." She grits her teeth at him.

"You knock out my best pal, Tommy and push me into the locker. What if something was sticking out of it and I got seriously hurt. I would say we're even." He said making Lyn roll her eyes.

"I would say you owe me." She cocks an eyebrow at him.

"How can I repay you?" He licks his lips.

"Stay away from my brother." She growls.

"Will do, not like I want to hang around a middle school kid anyways," He rolls his eyes at her request. He was hoping it would have been something hot. He wasn't stupid. He knew she was only using his body for a dance partner Halloween night. He wouldn't mind her using him again.

"Tell me is my dad watching?" She looks behind him to see Mr. Hargrove was watching from the screen in porch.

"He is. It's creepy." She told him. Billy grabs her face to force her into a kiss. While his technique was good, the taste of cigarettes wasn't so appealing now that she was sober.

He pulls away and winks at her. "I'll see you at school tomorrow." He swaggers his way back into his house.

She rolls her window up before opening the ghost trap. "Don't cause me any more trouble." Dart hops out of the trap and onto the comfy seat. "Here, you like the cold right." She turns the ac so it was right on him. He wiggles his tail in happiness.

She drove to the local pet shop. "Alright, you have to go back in." She points to the ghost trap. He let out a small hiss. "Then hide under the seat, you can't be seen." She groans. She was amazed when he jumps off the seat and crawl underneath it.

She got out of the car quickly, not wanting to give Dart a chance of running out. The bell above the door rang as she enters the pet shop. "Hey, Rosalyn, Dr. Myung sends you down for some supplies." Dahlia, the daughter's owner greeted her.

"It's for Dustin's new pet. Can you get me some crickets and two small mice?" She figures since Dart looked like he was going to be a big frog that would be his diet.

"Oh, you got him a snake." She walks over to the cricket's cage.

"A big frog," Lyn told her.

"Cool." She passes her the bag of crickets before going over to the mice cage. After she boxed up the mice, they walk over to the register. "10 dollars," She said. Lyn passed her the money and thanked her. She walks out of the door with the bag in one hand and the box in the other.

She got in the car and Dart was quick to come out and launch at the box. "Hey, you wait until we go home." He let out a little huff and crawls in her lap to curl up. "Aw," she pets him before starting up the car.

She drove home and parks her car in the driveway. "Alright bud, you got to get back inside the trap, so my mom doesn't see you." She opens the ghost trap. He climbs in and she shut it. She put the cricket bag and mice box into her backpack. She walks into her house.

"Hey, honey. How was school? Where's Dustin?" Her mom smiles at her from her recline, where she was cuddling with Meows.

"Hey mom, school was good. Dustin is at Mikes." She answers her questions while making her way to Dustin's room. She put Dart in the tank and open the cricket bag a little to let out a few crickets. She put the cover back on the tank and tied up the bag. She kept her eyes on the floor as she walks out of the room. She wanted Dart to eat food that's natural for him, but she didn't want to watch him. She walks into the kitchen to wet a dishrag and put it in the freezer. She went into the garage to grab her old hamster's cage.

She went back into Dustin's room and carefully put the crickets into the cage. She grabs the mice box and wonders where she could put them. A thud from the tank made her look up to see Dart had his front paws on the glass as he seems to be staring at the mice box. Lyn found it strange since he didn't have any eyes. "Alright, if you're still hungry," She drops the two mice in. She put the cover on and looks away, but she could still hear the growling, the mice cries, and the loud chewing.

When the noise died down, she looks back to see him lying on his side. From his breathing, she assumes he was sleeping. She got up and took the crickets into her room. She put it into the sewing cabinet. She lay down on her bed to take a quick nap since she had a late shift.

Her alarm wakes her. She got up to turn it off and get ready for work. She put on her scrubs, brushes her hair and put it in a high ponytail.

She went into the kitchen and pull out the frozen dishrag. She went to Dustin's room, to see him hold Dart. "Dustin if you're going to hold him locks the door." She scolds him as she shut and locks the door.

"I figure he would like this." She put the frozen towel on Dart. He purred in appreciation. "He's kind of cute. He's ugly cute, but cute nonetheless." She looks down at the frog slug.

"I think he's cute too." Dustin gave her a big smile.

"I'll see you two after work. I love you." She ruffles Dustin's hair and gave Dart a pet.

She walks out of the room and closes the door behind her. She went into the living room to say bye and I love you to her mom and Meows before going out to her car. Since the night at the school with the Demogorgon, she had been telling Dustin and her mom I love you every day. It was something she did subconsciously that only Dustin noticed. He didn't say anything, it was a harmless habit.

She parks her car in the vet's parking lot and went inside the building. She put her purse in her locker in the back. "Hey Lyn, I heard from Dahlia that Dustin got a new frog. You should bring him in." Dr. Myung came in the break room when she heard Lyn.

"I would have to convince Dustin first. He's convinced that Dart is an undiscovered frog. He's paranoid that someone going to steal him." She laughs in nervousness.

"Put in a good word for me." The doctor laughs along with her. She thought Dustin's spunky attitude for science was adorable.

"I'll try my best, but he wouldn't even show his favorite teacher." She warns before going in the back to start tending to the animals.

Lyn was waiting outside of the boy's locker room for Steve. All-day she had been running interference, so he wouldn't find out about the rumors of Nancy and Jonathan. After Steve and Nancy unofficially broke up yesterday, she and Jonathan disappear. They weren't here today either. Everyone was talking about them having an affair behind Steve's back.

Lyn knew she was only preventing the inevitable since he had basketball practice with Billy and Tommy. There was no way they wouldn't find a way to rub it in his face.

Lyn was getting tired of waiting, especially when the others guys were walking out talking about how Billy would be taking Steve's captain spot this year. If she wasn't scared of seeing something that would haunt her for the rest of her life, she would have marched in there already to tell Steve to hurry up.

Lyn perk up when she saw Steve emerge from the door, but he wasn't

alone. Tommy and Billy were behind him. "Seriously Henderson don't sweat it. The girl was into some creepy stuff, that's not your fault." Tommy heckled him. Billy laughs made Tommy beam with pride.

"Tommy, can you act like less of a scorned ex-girlfriend?" Lyn rolls her eyes as she made herself known to the group. Tommy, who still had a black eye, glared at the girl but kept his mouth shut.

"Hey, baby. First, you drop my step-sister off, then you meet my dad, and now you're waiting for me after practice. I think you want to get serious." Billy wraps his arms around her waist and gave her an obnoxious peck on the lips that made a loud smacking sound.

"I only did the first two things, big guy." She put her hands on his chest to push him off her. "I came to check on Steve." She looks her friend over.

"I'm fine. I don't care." He shrugs, but he wasn't convincing anyone.

"Damn Harrington, you are pathetic. What are you going to do to cheer him up? Hope it's not something I wouldn't approve of, babe." He wraps an arm around her shoulders. She was beginning to regret helping him.

"Don't you have a date to get ready for?" Tina was in her science class. She was babbling loudly about her hot date with Billy tonight.

"You jealous?" He smiles smugly down at her.

"No, just wondering if I'll mono from kissing you with all the other saliva you got in your mouth." She moves out of his arms and hooks her arm with Steve's.

"Watch yourself, Harrington. Don't let me hear about your hands going anywhere inappropriate!" Billy yells at their backs with Tommy crackling.

"What is he going on about?" Steve asked when we were out of hearing distance.

"I drop his step sister off at his house yesterday. His dad is a bigger jackass than him. I somehow end up playing Billy's girlfriend that

allows him to date other girls." She sighs. She used their hooks arms to make them take a turn that would lead them to the parking lot.

"How did that happen?" Steve looked disgusted.

"Didn't you hear, his dad a bigger jackass than him? Like, seriously I felt bad for Billy. I can't imagine living with your bully." She shudders, remembering how his dad seems to enjoy terrorizing his son.

"I still think he's an asshole." He shrugs, refusing to feel sorry for the guy that doesn't know him but goes out of his way to make his life hell.

"Two things can be true. Billy can be an asshole and I can feel bad for him." She put two fingers up. She wiggles one and then the other.

"Seem like we are both having relationship problems." He laughs at the predicament his friend found herself in.

"I plan to never run into Mr. Hargrove again." Lyn felt like it would easy to avoid the man. She didn't run into him until she went to his house. If she ever had to drop Max off again, she would drive off right away. "How are you going to solve your problem?" She stopped when they got to Darling and throws her bag in the passenger seat.

"Flowers, chocolates, and an apology always work, right?" He leans against his BMW.

"What are you going to apologize for?" She tilts her head. She wasn't even sure what he could apologize for.

"For everything," His voice went a pitch higher as he shrugs.

"Something tells me she's going to want specifics." She giggles at how clueless he was sometimes.

Steve took a long time thinking, before jumping up with hands in the air and a big smile on his face. "I'll sorry for putting her on the spot and not letting her explain."

"I guess." She shrugs.

"What's wrong with that?" He crosses his arms over his chest. He felt like he had a really good idea.

"Maybe I'm biased because I'm closer to you than Nancy. I just don't feel like you should be the one apologizing. But, I get it, in a relationship sometimes that's what you got to do." She shrugs as she kicks the gravel. She felt bad for Steve. He was walking miles for someone who wasn't even willing to take a step for him. Then she felt like shit when she realized, she did the same thing to Steve for three years. "I'm sorry." She blurted out.

"What?" He pushes his eyebrows together in confusion.

"I got to think about how much effort you put into making a relationship work. It got me thinking about how I turn you down for almost three years. You got so sweet and creative with asking. I was cruel about it sometime. I'm sorry." She looks back up at him with tears forming in her eyes. She wonders how many times she made him feel like shit. She didn't feel any guilt for it until now.

"I should be the one saying I'm sorry. I ask you out every day for two and a half school years and every time I saw you during the summer. I was harassing you." He shook his head. He was ashamed when he thought of the person he used to be.

"Remember the time you filled my locker with white and purple balloons because they're my favorite colors. Attach to one was a note asking me out." Lyn smile remembers the time she was tempting to say yes to him.

"You think I should do that for Nancy?" He said bring her smile to a frown.

It made her chest clench up to think of Steve doing for another girl what he did for her. She shook her head, "I think Nancy saw that. You can't recycle an idea you had for another girl on her. You should stick to the chocolate, flowers, and apologize. It's a classic triple threat." Lyn had no idea if Nancy saw that, but she would be damned if Nancy was going to get special treatment. Especially, when she was in the wrong since Steve shouldn't even be apologizing to her, she can get a lame overdone apologize.

"I better go before the flower shop closes. Thanks for listening to me." He kissed her on the cheek and got into his BMW.

Lyn got into her car as he drove off. She couldn't wait to get home and take a break from this stressful high school drama she found herself in. But, Lyn would beg for high school drama when she found out what was waiting for her at home.

14. Dig Dug

Lyn waves to Lucas who was riding his bike past her before pulling into her driveway. "Mews! Mewsy! Mews! Mewsy!" Claudia was in the front yard waving a cat toy around. Lyn sigh as she got out of the car, hoping she would be able to find the cat fast. If not, she knew she would be up all night driving around town looking for her.

"Hey mom, did you check if she was in my room? She blends in sometimes with the yarn." She approaches her mom.

"Yeah, I even take them all out to see if she buried herself in them but she wasn't there. You didn't see any cat that looked like her on the ride home, did you?" She looks paranoid with the way she kept looking up and down the street.

"No, I didn't see any cats," Lyn told her.

Claudia turns around to make her way back into the house. Lyn drags her feet as she follows behind her. "Dusty, baby, you're sure she's not in your room," She asks her son who was on the phone.

Dustin put his hand up to tell her to be quiet as he spoke with someone. "Uh-huh. Thank you so much, Mr. McCorkle. Thank you so much. You are a true lifesaver. All right, this was great. Thank you. All right. Have a good one. Bye-bye, now. All right. You, too." He hung up the phone and turn to them, "All right, great news."

"They found her?" Their mom sounded so relieved that someone had found her baby.

"No. But they saw her wandering around Loch Nora." Dustin spoke to her in a calm tone that one had to have when speaking to their mother when she got like this. Lyn narrow her eyes, how did that lazy cat get all the way across town.

"How did the poor baby get all the way out there?" Claudia let out a few happy tears.

"I don't know. Lost, I guess. But they're going to look for her. And I'll

stay here, just in case they call again. And you're going to go help look? Yeah? Yeah? Give me a hug. Give me a hug. Go get her." Dustin pulls her into a hug. "You're going to find her." He let his mother go.

"Okay." She put on her sunglasses. She grabs her keys and purse.

"We can find her." He nods to encourage her to go out of the door.

"We can find her." She repeated and opens the door.

"I love you." Dustin gave her the pearly smile she loved so much.

"I love you." Claudia said to her son before turning to her daughter to also tell her, "I love you." "I love you too, mom." Lyn smiles at her.

"All right, go." He waves his hands. She nods her head and shut the door. Soon after, they heard the engine running and her pulling out the driveway. "Alright, help me look for weapons that could take out a small Demogorgon." He speaks as he began to search the closet. He pulls out his old hockey goalie pads.

"What?" She gasps.

"Will was right, Dart is a Demogorgon. He grows to be twice the size of Meows, maybe more. I came home to him eating her in my room. I have him locked in there right now." He explains while continuing to search the house.

"I'll get the crowbar from the garage." She ran out to the garage to grab the tool that would be used as a weapon. She went back into the house to see Dustin laying baloney out, instead of stopping to ask questions she ran to her room.

She got a scrunchie from her vanity to give herself side braid and a bun at the end. She grabs her smallest can of hairspray and the lighter that originally belongs to Lonnie Byers. She tucks them both in the back pockets of her shorts.

She went back into the living room to see Dustin wearing his goalie pad, hockey mask, oven mitts, and a hockey stick in hand.

"You're going in with no protection." He looked her up and down. She

was wearing black shorts with fishnets underneath and combats boots on. She had on her favorite Bride of Frankenstein off the shoulder sweatshirt.

"Unless you got another goalie uniform lying around, no, let's just do this." She hypes herself up to take on the mini monster.

"Here the plan, we were going to lure him with the baloney trail I made to get him into the cellar." He explains to her. She looks down at the baloney trail to see that it led outside.

"Okay." She nods her head, impressed that he had it all figured out.

"When I open the bedroom door, we have to run to the outside shed." He instructed.

"Can you run in that?" She remembers when he played for one season he would waddle more than walk.

"Kind of," He shrugs.

"How about you go to the shed now? And I'll open the door." She nods her head for him to go outside.

"What, no! We do this together." He shook his head.

"Dustin, you can't run. If it catches you, I wouldn't know what to do. If you die, I die. Please get to the shed, now." She begs. She could handle dying, but she couldn't handle losing a brother.

He nods his head and ran outside. She walked over to the door. "I got some more meat for you, Dart." She pushes open the bedroom door. "Oh fuck," She gasped at seeing Dart in his new form. He looks like a mini Demogorgon, except he seems to prefer moving on all fours.

When Dart crawls over Meow's body, Lyn turns around to run faster than she ever did before. She ran into the shed that Dustin was holding open for her. He slams it shut once she was in. They watched from the cracks in the shed as Dart came out of the house, following the baloney trail.

"Oh my god," Dustin whisper with anticipation as Dart made it to the

opening of the cellar. He looks down at the steps for a few seconds that felt like hours to the Henderson siblings.

"Oh shit," They gasp when Dart turns his head around toward the shed.

"Oh fuck," Lyn groan when he started making his way over to them.

"You know, if anything happens to you I wouldn't know what to do either. If you die, I die." Dustin pushes his sister down to make her fall on her butt and charge out of the shed. Dart let out a scared screech and ran the other way. Dart was turning to run back in the house, but Dustin swings his hockey stick to make him fly in the cellar.

Lyn got up and ran outside. Dustin closes the cellar and lays on top of it as Dart slam himself against the doors. She grabs the padlock and chain to close it up tightly. "Fuck, right when I was got attach to that bastard." Lyn put her head in the hands as tears build up in her eyes. It was a great few days of having a pet that was so responsive. She curses, with how loving and cuddling he was she couldn't believe that he was a Demogorgon.

"I know the feeling." He got up from the cellar doors. "I'm going to get the walkie and Meows. Can you grab the shovel from the shed? We got to bury her." He bent down to ask his sister.

"I got it." She nods her head, standing up.

"We are going to make it through this. We are going to do what's right." He promised her before going into the house.

She smiles as she watches him. "If my little boy has to become a man, at least I know he's going to be a good one." She went into the shed to grab the shovel. She walks into the woods just far enough so she couldn't see her house and began digging.

She wipes the sweat from her brow and climbs out of the hip-deep hole that she made. She turned around when she heard her brother's voice. "Guys, this is Dustin. CODE RED! I need you guys at my house.

"CODE RED!" He yelled into the headset that was attached to his walkie. He had Meows wrap up in a towel. Lyn went to grab the cat from him and put her in the hole. "No one is picking up, I tried the walkie. I tried all their house numbers. Nothing. I'm going to call Hopper again and try to contact the guys while I clean the blood from my carpet." He let out a sigh from no one answering.

"Okay, I'm going to finish this." She put the dirt back in the hole to cover Meows. He nods and heads back to the house. When she had the hole filled, she bowed her head. "You were a good cat, Meows. You were an amazing companion to my mother. You will forever be in my memory and my heart for that. I hope you have fun in kitty heaven."

She picks up the shovel and made her way back to the shed to trade it for the crowbar. She walks into the house to help Dustin clean the large bloodstain in his room. She grabs a sponge and got on her hands and knees to help him scrub.

"Guys, its Dustin, I need you to pick up. This is not a drill. It's code red. Hopper is missing, so I really need you guys. CODE RED!" He kept repeating over and over with no results. "Erica? Erica, is Lucas there?" He stops scrubbing to sit up. "Where is he? Is he with Mike? Please tell him it's super important. Please tell him that I have a code...Yep, code red. Exactly" He speaks to the girl, hoping that she could get Lucas for him.

"Erica?" He let out a groan of frustration as he rips the headset off and throws it across the room. "The Sass Queen hanged up?" Lyn sat up and admire the clean carpet.

"Yeah, she did. We got to go over to Mike's. We have to find someone." He got up.

They ran out to Darling. Lyn found herself once again treating residential areas like they were race tracks. The tires screech as she made the turn onto the road where the Wheelers live. Darling jerk from Lyn slams on the brakes in front of their house.

Dustin jumps out of the car and ran to their front door to ring the bell repeatedly. Lyn watches from the car as he spoke to Mr. Wheelers.

She let out a sigh as she tried not to cry when Dustin was walking back to the car by himself.

Steve's BMW pulls up and he came out with a bouquet of roses, the Henderson siblings perk up. Lyn got out of the car and Dustin ran over to him. "Steve. Are those for Mr. or Mrs. Wheeler?" He points to the roses.

"No." He shook his head, confused as to why he would give his girlfriend's parents flowers. Or maybe she considers herself his ex, he wasn't sure of their status at the moment.

"Good." Dustin took the roses from him.

"Hey. What the hell? Hey!" Steve yells, but Dustin ignores him to open the BMW's passenger door.

"Nancy isn't home." He turns around to tell him.

"Where is she?" Steve asked although he was sure the answer was with Jonathan.

"It doesn't matter. We have bigger problems than your love life. Do you still have that bat?" Dustin scoffs at his priorities.

"Bat? What bat?" He throws his hands in the air.

"The one with the nails, how many bats do you have?" Lyn snaps. She knows that Steve could be a little slow on the uptake, but she needs him to pick it up quickly.

"Yeah, I never took it out the trunk. Lyn, what's going on?" He turns to his best friend.

"I'll explain it on the way." Dustin points to the driver's seat to show Steve where he wanted him.

"Steve, we need you. We ignore a problem and let it get too big. After this, I'll do whatever to help you get Nancy back. I'll buy the damn balloons to put in her lockers, just please help us." Lyn begs as tears run down her face. Dart could get out and hurt anyone. Lyn didn't know if she could live with that guilt for the rest of her life.

"Okay, yeah. I'll help you." He reaches out to wipe her tears away and nod to Dustin that he was in.

Dustin and Steve got into the BMW while Lyn got back into Darling. They raced their way to the Henderson house.

15. The Spy

Lyn park Darling beside Steve's BMW in her driveway. Lyn got out of her car and made her way over to Dustin and Steve. They were looking into BMW's trunk that had the bat with nails in it. "This isn't some dumb prank it is, Lyn? I got things to do today." Steve turns to her. He felt his heart pounding in his chest. Even though he would act upset if it was a prank, it what he was hoping for.

"I wish it was, Steve." She reaches in and grabs the red flashlight that was in his car. She went into the garage to grab the weapons she gathers up. She passes the crowbar to Dustin. She kept the hairspray and lighter to herself. "You said you guys killed the last one with fire, right?" She shows Steve what she had in her hands.

"Yeah," He nods weakly. He grabs the bat from his car and closes the trunk.

Dustin went into the garage to grab his headset and walkie. "Alright, let go." He put it on as he walks to the backyard where the cellar is. Steve grabs the flashlight from Lyn to walk in front of them. He turns on the flashlight so they could see better, some much time had passed that it was now dark. The unknown around them was making everyone anxious.

Steve walks over to the cellar with Lyn and Dustin right behind him. Steve pokes the cellar's door with the bat to see if Dart would react. When he didn't, he slams the bat down on it. "I don't hear shit." He turns towards them.

"He's in there." Dustin nod to the cellar.

Steve lifted the flashlight up to shine it in his face. "All right, listen, kid. I swear if this is some sort of Halloween prank, you're dead."

"It's not." Dustin glares at the stubborn teen with squinted eyes.

"Alright?" He shrugs sarcastically.

"Stop acting likes a douche bag because you're heartbroken. It's not a

prank. We all wish we were doing something else right now. I would rather be doing homework or picking up a shift. Dustin would rather be hanging out with his friends. You would rather be making up with Nancy. But, we have more important matters to take care of." Lyn snaps. If Steve treated this like it was a game, he was going to die when those doors open.

"Alright," He nods his head. This being real was a hard pill to swallow.

"Can you get it out of my face?" Dustin put his hand up to block the light that was starting to hurt his eyes.

"You got a key for this thing?" He puts the light on the cellar. Lyn grabs the keys from her back pocket and hands it to him. He gave the flashlight to Dustin. He bent down and unlocks the cellar and opens the doors slowly. Lyn had the lighter and hair spray in hand ready to light Dart up if needed. But, nothing came running out at them. "Let me see that." He grabs the flashlight back from Dustin and shines it down into the cellar.

Everywhere Steve could shine the light there was no sign of anything living. "He must be further down there. I'll stay up here in case he tries to escape." Dustin said making Steve look back at him and shake his head.

"I'll go down with you." Lyn offers.

"No, you stay up here. The fewer bodies down there, the less error for confusion there be." Steve stood up. Dustin and Lyn held hands as he walks down the stairs. Soon he was out of the sights and all they could do is strain to hear what was going on.

A few minutes pass with the silent cellar. "Steve? Steve, what's going on down there?" Lyn calls for her friend.

Dustin and Lyn jump when the light flashes up at them. "Get down here." He orders. They slowly walk down the steps.

Lyn grimaced when Steve held up a Dart's shed skin with his bat. "Oh, shit." Dustin gasps when he realizes that meant Dart got bigger.

Steve flashes his light over to the giant hole in the wall. "Oh, shit!" The Henderson sibling yells as they ran over there to inspect the wall. He shines the light to show that the tunnel that Dart dug seems to be endless.

"No way. No way," Dustin shook his head.

"Oh my god, what if he's killing someone right now." Lyn looks down at her hands as if she would be able to see blood on them. "It's my fault." She put her hands over her face.

"Your fault, it's my fault. I found him and feed him. All that wasted nougat." He whines.

"But, I'm the one that feeds him meat. I gave him crickets and mice. I gave him his first kill and now he wants more." She couldn't believe that she was so desperate to keep a connection with Dustin that she let him keep a monster.

"Stop it, both of you. It doesn't matter who fault is it, all that matters right now is there a monster on the loose in our city." Steve scolds them. Dustin and Lyn look at him and nod their heads. "Come on, we'll take my car and go looking for him." He went up the stairs with the Henderson sibling behind him.

Dustin and Lyn grab their backpack before they got in the BMW. They drove around looking for Dart. Steve refuses to let them out of the car to go looking in the woods.

They stop at a gas station when they ran out of gas. "Here," Lyn pull a ten from her wallet and held it out to Steve.

"Don't worry, I got it." He pushes her hand away.

"Well, then use it to buy some snacks." She stuck her hand back out.

"Rosalyn, stop it. You earn your money. I get mine from my parents." He got out of the car.

"I'm going to go with him to pick out candy." Dustin got out of the car and follow Steve into the gas station.

Lyn leaned her head against the window. She had been fighting her sleep for the past two hours. Dustin was sleeping at the time, so she didn't want to leave Steve by himself. Now in the silence, she was unable to lift her eyelids.

Lyn, Dustin, and Steve were taking the buckets of raw meat and a gasoline can out of Steve's trunk. They end up parking on the side of the road when no one could stay up anymore. They woke up early in the morning and went to the supermarket to buy 6 pounds of raw meat and gasoline.

"Well, well, well look who it is?" Dustin moves away from them to talk to one of the guys on his walkie.

"About time someone answers. I was hoping it be Hopper, though." Lyn grumbles. She put her crowbar, hair spray, lighter, and matches into her backpack.

"Why Hopper?" Steve put his bat in his backpack along with the gasoline.

"Because he's big, manly, and knows how to shoot a gun." She said with a duh tone.

"I'm two of those and guns don't even work on these things." He rolls his eyes. Lyn giggle, Steve was tall but she wouldn't describe him as big. Hopper had that intimidating presence that the teenage boy didn't have. "What?" He snaps, not liking how funny she found what he said.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to laugh. It's just you're lean and Hopper bulky. The man looks like he could take out a bear if he needs too." She bites her bottom lip to stop from giggling when she saw how seriously upset he was.

"Just because a guy knows how to shoot a gun and act like some macho, mysterious loner doesn't mean he's some superior male." He grumbles.

"Mysterious, are we still talking about Hopper?" She raises an

eyebrow at him.

Steve picks up his bucket of raw meat. "Let go." He calls out to Dustin. She rolls her eyes while she picks up her own bucket up.

"Just be there, stat. Over and out," Dustin spoke into his walkie as he ran to grab his bucket and follow the older teens.

They made their way along the old railroad track and throwing raw meat as they went. They form a line with Dustin in the front, Lyn in the middle, and Steve in the back. Dustin was explaining everything to Steve. Lyn was learning some new things too, like the fact that Dart was his way to win a girl's heart. "All right, so let me get this straight. You kept something you knew was probably dangerous in order to impress a girl who you just met?" Steve tilts his head as he stares at the back of Dustin's head.

"Alright, that's grossly oversimplifying things." Dustin shook his head.

"I mean, why would a girl like some nasty slug anyway?" Steve pulls a gross-out face at the thought of the slimy creature.

"He was ugly cute like a pug or those hairless cats." Lyn defends her brother, baby dart, and herself.

"Yeah and he was an interdimensional slug? That's awesome." Dustin smile, he still found the possibility of other worlds to be cool. If there was the upside-down, there had to be others.

"Well, even if she thought it was cool, which she didn't, I just... I don't know. I just feel like you're trying too hard." Steve shrugs. Lyn shot him a look. He was not one who should be talking about others trying too hard.

"Well, not everyone can have your perfect hair, alright?" Dustin rolls his eyes. Steve dated plenty of girls. He didn't know what it was like to feel like an outcast that no girl wants to even make eye contact with.

"It's not about the hair, man. The key with girls is just acting like you don't care." Steve let out a chuckle at the kid's ignorance.

"Oh no, you are not going to give that kind of advice to my brother." Lyn shakes a finger in Steve's face.

"Rosalyn, why don't you walk ahead of us," Dustin pushes her to walk forward.

"What, so you can take douche bag 101, I don't think so." She glares at her brother.

"I would like to get advice from a male who has been in a relationship before." He nods his head forward for her to get lost.

"Yeah, Lyn, he needs advice that would work in the real world, not in books." Steve spat out at her. He was getting tired of her insults. First, she says he wasn't manly and now he wasn't good enough to be giving advice to her brother.

"You're right this isn't like my books. In my books when the good girl changes the bad boy's way, they live happily ever after. Maybe I'll get some experience with Billy." Lyn's words and glare cut him deep. She turns around to rush ahead of them. She couldn't believe that two of the closest people to her were throwing her inexperience in her face. Steve didn't care about it when he was begging for her advice the other day. Dustin that ungrateful brat, she was sacrificing her youth for him and their mom. It was moments like this she wanted to be pity. She wanted to quit her job and act like a normal teen that dates and parties. Then they would realize how much she does for them when they can't buy action figures or cat food anymore.

When Lyn was out of earshot, Dustin turns to Steve who was still stunned by what she said. He knows she could get nasty when she was upset, but he hadn't seen that side of her in a while. "So you act like you don't care, even if you do?" He asks him.

He looks down at the boy who was just starting to interact with the opposite sex. "Yeah exactly, it drives them nuts." He gave him advice that works on most teenage girls.

"Then what?" Dustin like always wanted to soak up all the knowledge that he could.

"You just wait until, uh..." Steve look to make sure that Lyn was still a good distance ahead. "...until you feel it."

"Feel what?" Dustin pushes his eyebrows together.

"It's like before it's going to storm, you know? You can't see it, but you can feel it, like this, uh electricity, you know?" Steve was having a hard time explains the gut feeling that let him know that a girl was ready.

"Oh, like in the electromagnetic field when the clouds in the atmosphere," Dustin felt relieved that he could compare it to something that he knew.

"No, no, no, no, no. Like, like sexual electricity." Steve shook his head.

"Oh." Dustin gasps. He was realizing that this was like nothing he had ever experienced before. He didn't even have anything to relate it to.

"You feel that and then you make your move." He moves his hand forward quickly like he was striking something.

"So that's when you kiss her?" Dustin smile, excited to get to the part he was looking forward to.

"No, whoa, whoa, slow down, Romeo." Steve put his hand up like a crossing guard telling him to wait.

"Sorry." He looks down ashamed.

"Sure, okay, some girls, yeah, they want you to be aggressive. You know, strong, hot and heavy, like a.... I don't know, like a lion. But others, you got to be slow, you got to be stealthy, like a... like a ninja." Steve explain it the best he could. Despite what Lyn thought, he did want to give her brother good advice.

"What type is Nancy?" He asks about the girl he thought Steve was still dating.

"Nancy's different. She's different than the other girls." Steve looked down, wondering if he could get her back. If not, then would he ever

find a girl like her again?

"Yeah, she seems pretty special, I guess. It's funny, the guys and I always joke about Lyn being a different species because no one's charm works on her. We joke that she must have a different courting ritual." Dustin laughs. He had seen many guys hit on her. Some were older, handsome, and had money. She would take one look at them and rolls her eyes.

"Yeah, I know that all too well. But, girls like Nancy and your sister are rare. You're not going to come across them often, so the advice I gave you will work on 99 percent of the girls you come across." Steve told him. He didn't want to think about girls like them. Girls like Nancy and Rosalyn would break your heart when it ended.

"But this girl's special, too, you know. It's just, like, something about Max." He blushes as he thought about her.

"Whoa, Whoa, Whoa! Hey, Hey, Hey!" Steve protests.

"What?" Dustin looks confused about what he said wrong.

"You're not falling in love with this girl, are you?" He narrows his eyes at the younger boy.

"Uh, no... No." He shook his head. He likes Max a lot, but he didn't know her enough to call it love.

"Okay, good. Don't." Steve warns him.

"I won't." Dustin promise.

"She's only going to break your heart, and you're way too young for that shit." He let out bitterness as he spoke. A silence fell between them as Dustin thought about what Steve said. "Faberge," He decides to drop a gem on him.

"What?" Dustin once again looked at Steve in confusion.

"It's Faberge organics. Use the shampoo and conditioner, and when your hair's damp. Not wet, okay? When it's damp," Steve put emphasize the word damp every time he said it.

"Damp," Dustin repeat to let Steve know that he got it.

"You do four puffs of the Farrah Fawcett spray." He finishes giving away his secret.

"Farrah Fawcett spray?" Dustin giggles, that was the same spray his sister uses.

"Yeah Farrah Fawcett, you tell anyone I just told you that and your ass is grass. You're dead, Henderson. Do you understand?" He stops to threaten the boy.

"Yup," He pops out, still amused.

"Okay," Steve waves his hand to let him know they could continue moving.

"Farrah Fawcett, really," Dustin chuckled.

"I mean, she's hot." Steve shrugs.

"You know my sister probably knows." The younger teen watch with amusement at Steve's horrified face.

"What?" He looks from Lyn's back to Dustin.

"She has the same spray. She knows the smell. I'm surprised I didn't recognize it earlier." He got on his tippy toes to get a whiff of Steve's hair.

They stood at the entrance of the junkyard. "Oh yeah, yeah, this will do. This will do just fine. Good call, dude." Steve smile as he surveys the land. Dustin beam at the praise.

They throw red meat all over the junkyard and dump the rest of their buckets into the middle of the field making a big pile. "I said medium-well!" They look up to see Lucas with his bike and Max standing beside him.

"Who's that?" Steve asks. When Dustin didn't answer him, he looks over at his new buddy to see the way he was staring at her. Dustin

went over to pull Lucas behind an abandoned car.

Max stood awkwardly in front of Lyn and Steve. "Hey, Max." She greeted the girl. Steve let out a quiet oh from beside her. "I see that Lucas told you." She wanted to know where the girl stood on everything.

"Yeah, so this is all true?" She squints her eyes at them. It was either true or living in a small town was so boring that two high school seniors would help pull a prank on her.

"Yup, it's true. I don't know why he brought you here though." Lyn groan. They didn't need another person's life being on the line.

"I didn't believe him, still not sure I do." She shrugs as she looks around for any evidence.

"You'll see for yourself in a little while. Why don't you help Steve and I board the bus up?" The three of them split up to find random pieces of scrap metal and wood to cover up the window on the bus. Dustin and Lucas seem to be arguing behind the car.

"Alright, I had enough." Steve grabs a fold-up chair that was beside Lyn and walks over to the boys. Lyn stood up from her spot to watch as he hit the car with the chair, scaring the shit out of the boys. "Hey! Dickheads! How come the only one helping out Lyn and I is this random girl? We lose light in 40 minutes. Let's go." He glares at the two boys as he moves to get back to work. "LET'S GO, I SAID!" He yells when he saw they were still in a state of shock from him scaring them.

"All right, asshole!" Dustin yells at his back as he follows after him.

"Okay! Stupid" Lucas mutters.

They work together to make the old rutty bus into a fort. The boys grabbed scrap metal and put it over the windows of the bus or anywhere Dart could get in. Steve was making a gasoline trial from the pile of meat to the bus, so they could light the monster up without getting close. Max and Lyn carried in a ladder, so they would climb up to see out. Lyn went up to stand on the roof as Steve throw

tires up to her. The tires went around the top, so their lookout wouldn't be seen.

"Alright, we're losing daylight let's get in." Steve ushered them into the bus. Dustin was the last in closing the door.

It got dark fast, Lucas went to the roof to keep watch with his binoculars. The rest of them were sitting around on the bus.

Lyn didn't know she could be bored out of her mind and scared shitless at the same time. She watches from beside Steve as Dustin did his nervous pacing. She put her head on Steve's shoulder as he plays with Mr. Byers lighter. "I'm sorry if I hurt you when I made that gab about Nancy earlier." She whispers to him.

"I'll forgive you if you agree to never go out with Billy." He whispers back to her. She pokes him in the side making him jerk. "And I'm sorry too, there is nothing wrong with being inexperienced."

"I wasn't going to go out with Billy anyways." She was his friend, so it would be horrible for her to go out with someone he hated. Lyn knew in her gut that it was deeper than that. Steve did too. The difference was the male was willing to acknowledge that. This made him feel like an even worst boyfriend to Nancy.

"So you really fought one of these things before?" Max stares at Steve. Lyn pokes his side again for him to realize that she was talking to him. He looks up to nod at her before going back to play with the lighter. "And you're, like, totally, 100% sure it wasn't a bear?"

"Shit. Don't be an idiot. Okay? It wasn't a bear. Why are you even here if you don't believe us? Just go home." Dustin stops pacing to snap at her. Steve nod in respect as Lyn and Max look at Dustin like he lost his mind.

"Geesh, someone's cranky, past your bedtime?" Max got up and rolls her eyes. She went up the ladder to be with Lucas.

"That's good. Just show her you don't care." Steve gave him a thumb up. Lyn slaps his hand down.

"I don't." Dustin sighs. Steve throws him a wink. "Why are you

winking, Steve? Stop," He scolds the older teen when he winked again.

"I'm sorry, but how was that good work. He just pushes her into someone else's arms." Lyn points up to where Lucas and Max were most likely bonding.

"Oh my god, Steve," Dustin gasps, looking helpless to Steve.

Lyn stood up and put her hands on her brother's shoulders. "I know I haven't been in a relationship. I've only read books, but that means I have experienced a hundred love stories. I can tell you confidently that loves happens when people are being themselves. Heartbreak comes when people pretend to be something there not. You can only pretend for so long before you get sick of that person and yourself." A realization fell over both of the males on the bus.

Dustin realized that getting the girl and love were two different things. Steve's advice was for temporary flings, while his sister's advice was for a long commitment.

Steve realized that Nancy was pretending to be someone else since Barbara died. She was no longer the good girl that was dying for a bad boy to help her let her hair down. She was growing into the strong independent woman who was ready to take on the world that she was meant to be. Steve was still trying to figure it out. He knew that he was always going to be laid back. He was never going to want to chase after things like Nancy. They were growing up and apart, while that didn't lessen his heartache, it did make him feel better about letting her go.

A roar pulled everyone from their deep thoughts. The three of them ran to the bar window. "You see him?" Dustin asks them.

"No." They shook their heads.

"Lucas, what's going on?" He yells up to his friend.

"Hold on!" Lucas yells down to them. "I've got eyes! Ten o'clock! Ten o'clock!"

"There." Lyn points to the shadowy figure in the fog.

"What's he doing?" Dustin squints his eyes, waiting for the Demogorgon to go in the fire zone.

"I don't know." Steve shook his head. They stood there waiting for him to make a move. "He's not taking the bait. Why is he not taking the bait?" He glares at the figure.

"Maybe he's not hungry?" Dustin shrugs.

"Maybe the food has to be alive like snakes," Lyn groans, thinking that they were all going to die. She wonders how the lab would cover this up.

"Maybe he's sick of cow," Steve stood up and grabs his bat.

"Steve? Steve, what are you doing? Steve?" Henderson's siblings yell at him.

"Just get ready." He throws the lighter at Dustin.

"Wait, you can't go out there." Lyn shook her head and held onto his arm.

"I got too." He gave her a peck on the lips. It didn't last for even a second, but it throws her off enough that Steve was able to slip from her grasp and out the door.

"I think Steve found out your courting ritual." Dustin smiles up at his sister.

"Shut up." She smacks him upside the head. They went back to watching through the window as Steve slowly walks over to Dart.

"What's he doing?" Max came down the ladder.

"Expanding the menu," Dustin told her.

"Don't say it like that." Lyn smacks him again.

"Stop it." He glares at her.

"Focus guys." Max pushes their heads to look back out the window.

Steve stood his ground as he swings his bat around to taunt the creature. "He's insane." She watches with wide eyes as Dart came through the fog. Lyn nod in agreement with her.

"He's awesome," Dustin smiles.

"Steve, watch out!" Lucas yells. Lyn looks around to see multiple Demogorgon coming towards him from all angles.

"A little busy here!" He was so focused on the one in front of him he didn't notice he was surrounded.

"Three o'clock! Three o'clock!" Lucas yells from the top. Steve finally turns his head to see that there was more than one.

"Steve! Steve! Abort! Abort!" Dustin ran to open the bus doors to yell out to him.

"Steve, run! Come back!" Lyn ran to the doors also.

"Steve, hurry! Steve, run!" They yelled at him. Steve move towards the bus when one jump at him. Lucky, he made contact with his bat and force it away from him. He ran to the bus with a group of them on his tail. He jumps into the bus and as able to slam the door shut with his feet. The monster started throwing themselves into the door.

"Shit!" Dustin curses.

"Are they rabid or something?" Max cried out as the creatures were throwing themselves at the bus from all over.

"They can't get in! They can't!" Lucas tried to convince himself more than us. They were rocking the bus violently. Lyn grabs a piece of extra scrap metal and gave it to Steve. He put it in between his feet and the door for extra pressure.

They let out a scream as one broke through the back. Steve got up and ran over to beat it to death with his bat. Lyn had to put her crowbar into one face when it tried to come in from the window by them. "I've been dying for some action, come at me." She glared at the hideous monster.

"Shit! Is anyone there? Mike? Will? God! Anyone! Shit! We're at the old junkyard, and we are going to die!" Dustin screams into the walkie.

Everyone froze as they felt and heard one jump into the roof of the bus. It looks down at Max who was the closest to the opening. She let out a scream being face to face with it for the first time.

"Out of the way! Out of the way!" Steve pushes Max to the side and raises his bat. "You want some? Come get this!" He and the monster stare each other down. It turns its head like it heard something and let out a roar before running off. Lyn ran to the window to see they were all running away.

Lyn looks back at the group. She saw Lucas and Max were holding hands, which made her turn towards Dustin who definitely notices too. If he's sad and confused face was anything to go by.

"I'll go out and look. Stay on the bus." Steve walks towards the entrance. Lyn moves silently after him. "Stay on the bus, Lyn," He didn't have to look back to know she would follow him. Steve slowly opens the door. The rest watched from the doorway. Dustin had a hand wrapped around his sister's arm to keep her in place.

"Jeez. What happened?" Lucas looks around.

"I don't know." Lyn shrugs, wondering the same thing.

"Steve scared 'em off?" Dustin beam at his new idol.

"No. No way. They're going somewhere." Steve put his bat over his shoulder and looks back at them.

16. The Mind Flayer

Steve, Lyn, Dustin, Max, and Lucas were walking through the forest to see if they could find where the Demogorgons were going. "You're positive that was Dart?" Lucas asks.

"Yes. He had the same exact yellow pattern on his butt." Dustin said, making Steve throw him a judgmental look.

"He was tiny two days ago." Max points out.

"Well, he's molted three times already." Dustin put up three fingers.

"Molted?" Steve squinted. The only molted he knew was the shake and the candy.

"Molted, he shed his skin to make room for growth like hornworms," Dustin explains.

"That was the slimy thing you found in the basement." Lyn told Steve, who let out an 'oh' of realization. "What did you think that was?" She raises an eyebrow at him. She thought he knew that was Dart's old skin and that why he shows it to them.

"I don't know, I thought it gross so it had to come from the thing." He shrugs.

"When's he going to molt again?" Max wanted to know how much time they had until he became more dangerous.

"It's got to be soon. When he does, he'll be fully grown, or close to it. And so will his friends." Dustin said making a shiver go down Lyn's spine. They weren't even fully grown and they were more powerful than them. She wished she had a flamethrower to light them all up, but sadly she didn't. She would have to make do with her hairspray and lighter.

"Yeah, and he's going to eat a lot more than just cats." Steve grumbles. The bigger they get the bigger prey they can takedown.

"Wait, a cat? Dart ate a cat?" Lucas grabs Dustin's shoulder and turns

his friend to face him.

"No. What? No." He shook his head.

"What are you talking about? He ate Mews." Steve narrows his eyes at Dustin.

"Shut your mouth," Lyn whispers to him.

"What's the problem?" He shrugs, not knowing why that would be a secret.

"Mews? Who's Mews?" Max turns to Dustin.

"It's Dustin's cat." Steve was wondering why his friends didn't know about his pet.

"Steve!" Dustin glares at him.

"I knew it! You kept him!" Lucas pokes a finger into his friend's shoulder.

"No! No. No, I... No, I... He missed me. He wanted to come home." Dustin was stumbling over his words before he came up with the story that Dart found his way home.

"Bullshit! Did you know about this too Lyn?" Lucas turns to her.

"Yeah, lay off. She only let him keep it because she wanted to keep a connection with Dustin, especially since he doesn't want to hang out with her anymore." Steve defends his friend.

"Steve! I told you that in confidence." She scolds him. She told him that when Dustin was sleeping in the car last night when they were driving around looking for Dart. She didn't want Dustin feeling bad about not hanging out with her. Steve was right when he said that Dustin wanting to spend time apart from her is health.

"Okay, what's your excuse?" Lucas pushes Dustin's shoulder to get his sad face off his sister.

"I didn't know he was a Demogorgon, Okay?" Dustin shook his hand.

He felt like shit right now, he lied to his friends and got them in a big mess. On top of that, he has been making his sister feel like shit.

"Oh, so now you admit it?" Lucas glares at him.

"Guys, who cares? We have to go." Max looks around. Standing in one place couldn't be a good idea.

"I care! You put the party in jeopardy! You broke the rule of law!" He points an accusing finger at him.

"So did you!" Dustin screams in his face.

"What?" Lucas gasps.

"You told a stranger the truth!" Dustin flashed the light on Max's face.

"A stranger?" She gasps feeling insulted. She was their friend, not a stranger.

"You wanted to tell her, too!" Lucas glares. The only reason Max wasn't in the party was Mike.

"But I didn't, Lucas, okay? I didn't tell her! We both broke the rule of law, okay? So we're even.

We're even." Dustin screams back at him.

"No, no! We're not even. Don't even try that. Your stupid pet could have eaten us for dinner!" Lucas waves his hands around in the air.

Lyn notices Steve moving from the corner of her eye. She looks to see where he was looking. She moves in the same direction when she couldn't see anything, then she gasps when she heard the noise. "Guy, enough." She scolds them but they kept arguing.

"GUYS!" Steve yells louder than they were arguing. Lucas and Dustin shut up to see what he wanted when they heard the same noise. He moves his hand and the group ran in the direction of the sound. Lyn stops when she notices Max didn't move. She ran back for her.

"Hey, guys, why are you headed towards the sound? Hello? Hello?"

Max yells into the woods.

"The price of knowing is that you have to keep up." Lyn grabs the redhead's wrist and tugs her along. Following the noise lead them to a cliff, where the loud roar seems to be echoing around.

"I don't see him." Dustin shines his light out over the woods.

Lucas looks around using his binoculars. "It's the lab. They're going back home."

"Well then, let's make sure they stay there." Lyn walks back down the cliff, so they could be on level ground and have a clear path to the lab.

Dustin ran right beside her. "I didn't mean to push you away. I didn't want to feel like a little kid with my big sister having to accompany me everywhere." He took his hat off to scratch his head.

"It is fine, I get it. It wasn't like I was hanging out with mom all day when I was 13." She shrugs.

"Still, it crappy of me to be taking your money and coming to you with all my problems but not let you hang out with the party, especially when they're your friends too. So, if you ever want to come along, you can." He put his hat back on and fixes his curls so they weren't in his eyes.

"That's nice, maybe I'll come along sometime. But, it really is fine. I think us spending time apart was healthy for both of us. You got to explore your independents and I made friends my own age. It's what we both needed." She pats him on the back.

"That was so cute." Steve came from behind them and pulls them into a hug.

"Yeah, I'm tearing up." Lucas fake cried into his hands. Max joins in as she dramatically sobs.

"Screw off," Lyn push Steve off of her.

"Assholes," Dustin sneers.

The group was finally at the edge of the forest that would lead them to the lab. "Hello? Who's there? Who's there?" A voice that Lyn recognizes yells out at them.

"Shut up Jonathan, we don't want everyone knowing we're here." She shines the flashlight in his face to shut him up.

"Lyn? Steve?" Jon and Nancy were surprised to see them coming from the forest.

"Nancy?" Steve looks between the two, wondering if she moved on already.

"Jonathan." Dustin chimes in wanting to be included.

"What are you doing here?" Nancy looks at Steve. She wasn't surprised that Lyn was with the kids, but she couldn't picture Steve tolerating them.

"What are you doing here?" He asks her back. His question was more aim at her being with Jonathan.

"We're looking for Mike and Will." She points to herself and then Jon.

"They're not in there, are they?" Dustin nod to the lab.

"We're not sure." Nancy shrugs.

"Why?" Jonathan asks. A Demogorgon roar from the woods answers his question.

"They're all running in this direction. They even stop attacking us to come here." Lyn explains to them.

"When was the last time you saw Will and Mike?" Jonathan asks.

"Not since Will's last episode at the school." Lyn thought back, that would have been two days ago.

"He had another episode." Jon gasps. Steve bite his tongue to stop from saying if he wasn't so busy stealing people's girlfriend then he

would know more about his brother.

"Two episodes in two days," Lucas put up two fingers.

"Did anyone else see him since them?" Jonathan looks at everyone else.

"We haven't seen Will," Steve spoke for everyone when no one answers right away.

"I haven't seen him since..." Lucas was trying to think if he saw him since that day at school. He felt like he had too, Will was one of his best friends but it wasn't coming to him.

Nancy turns around to look at the lab and announce, "The power's back." Jonathan ran to the security booth to push the button that opens the gate, but it wasn't budging. He kept pushing the button, hoping that it would.

"Let me try." Dustin went into the booth.

"Hang on." Jon put his hand up as he kept pushing the button.

"Let me try, Jonathan!" Dustin pushes himself in front of Jon, who rolled his eyes at the younger boy. Dustin pushes the button and looks up to see the gate not opening. "Son of a bitch! You know what..." He pushes the button over and over again.

"How about we try something else?" Lyn snaps.

"Like what?" Nancy asks, open for suggestions.

"Let's hops the fence." She looks up. It was tall, but she felt like it could be done.

"You see the barbed wire on top, right?" Steve pushes her chin all the way back, so she was staring at the barbwire.

Lyn pushes his hand off her chin and tugs on his bomber jacket. "We throw this over it and climb over."

"We are not ruining this jacket, use your sweater." He tugs on the

sleeve of her Frankenstein sweater.

"I only have a bra on underneath this." She glares.

"That doesn't sound like a good excuse." He tilts his head to the side as he smiles smugly at her.

"Don't flirt with my sister in front of your girlfriend. Don't flirt with her at all." Dustin yells at him from inside the booth.

"I don't think she's my girlfriend anymore, are you?" Steve looks over at her. Nancy bites her lip as she shook her head no. Jonathan stares at the lab not wanting to look at him. Lyn took a step back like it would lessen the awkwardness she was feeling.

"I got it!" Dustin scream, breaking the tension. They look back to see the gate opening.

"We'll drive up there. You guys stay here." Nancy said. Jonathan and her got in his car and drove in, leaving the rest of them to wait there.

Lyn leans against the security booth as she thought about how she was going to deal with her mom when this all over. She would probably find her crying on the recliner with no clue that her children weren't home. Lyn wonders if she could buy her a new cat and everything would be solved or if her mother would find that insulting to Meow's memory to get another too soon.

"Guys," Max shook them out of their boredom. Lyn watch as the Byers and Hopper's cars speed towards them.

"Get off the road." She pushes Lucas and Dustin into the security booth while she went on the grass with Max and Steve.

Hopper stops in front of them. "Get in." He orders.

Steve opened the passenger door and pushes the seat forward. "Come on." He waves towards the kids. They squeeze into the backseat. He pushes the seatback in place. He sat down and pulls Lyn on his lap before closing the door.

Lyn was sitting on the kitchen table with Max, Mike, and Lucas. Dustin was standing behind her. Steve walks in from the living room where Jonathan and Nancy were watching over Will.

"How many people at the lab? I don't know how many people are there! I don't know how many people are left alive! I am the police! Chief Jim Hopper! Yes, the number that I gave you, yes. Okay, yes, I got it. 6767 - I will be here." They listen to Hopper yell to some higher up organization on the phone. He slams the phone down, frustrated with the lack of urgency.

"They didn't believe you, did they?" Dustin put his hands down on the table as he stares at the chief.

"We'll see." He spat out.

"We'll see? We can't just sit here while those things are loose!" Mike rejected the idea.

"We stay here, and we wait for help." Hopper orders before walking out of the kitchen. He walks down the hall to go into Will's room to check on Joyce.

Mike got up and pick up a Rubik's cube that was painted blue. "Did you guys know that Bob was the original founder of the Hawkins AV club?" He looks up from the cube to tell them.

"Really?" Lucas asks. He knew that Bob like the same type of thing they did, but he didn't know that he started the club that they all loved.

"He petitioned the school to start it and everything. Then he had a fund-raiser for equipment. Mr. Clarke learned everything from him. Pretty awesome, right?" Mike told them about the hero that he had the honor to get to know.

"Yeah," Lyn nods. To think that one person impacts so many other lives. Some might say it is just a school club, but it encourages kids to learn and explore science. If it only changes four kids lives, then that was more than most people did.

"We can't let him die in vain." Mike slams the cube on the table.

"What do you want to do, Mike? The Chief's right on this. We can't stop those Demo-dogs on our own." Dustin screams at him. If a bunch of scientists who were studying them couldn't kill them, how were they supposed to?

"Demo-dogs?" Max raises her eyebrows at him.

"Demogorgon dogs. Demo-dogs. It's like a compound. It's like a play on words." Dustin kept dumb it down for her. Lyn turns around to shoot Steve a glare. He was leaning against the kitchen counter. He was the one who turns her gentleman into a jerk.

His eyes went wide under her evil stare. He thought she must have been mad about his groin slam into her ass when she was sitting on his lap. I'm sorry, he mouthed to her even though it wasn't his fault that the back road was bumpy. She rolls her eyes and turns back to the table, knowing that Steve probably didn't know why he was saying sorry.

"Okay." Max glare at Dustin for treating her like an idiot. It wasn't like demo-dogs were a common thing.

"I mean, when it was just Dart, maybe..." Dustin's sentence fell off. He was still convinced that it was his fault for keeping Dart.

"But there's an army now." Lucas finishes for him.

"Precisely," Dustin nods.

"His army," Mike stares down at the table in realization.

"What do you mean?" Steve asks, wondering if the kid knew who the alpha of the pack was.

"His army. Maybe if we stop him, we can stop his army, too." Mike ran out of the room. They got up to follow him into Will's room. He picks up one of the drawings and hands it to Dustin. Lyn looks over her brother's shoulder to see it. It was the Byers backyard but there were dark clouds with lightning striking down. A large dark monster that had many long arms was hanging over it.

"The shadow monster," Dustin recognized it.

"It got Will that day on the field. The doctor said it was like a virus, it infected him." Mike informed them.

"And so this virus, it's connecting him to the tunnels?" Max asks.

"To the tunnels, monsters, the Upside Down, everything," Mike explains further.

"So, how do we get it out of Will?" Lyn ask. If they took the virus from the host it would die.

"Whoa. Slow down. Slow down." Steve went into the circle that the kids and Lyn made to grab the picture from Mike.

"Okay, so, the shadow monster's inside everything. And if the vines feel something like pain, then so does Will," Mike dumb it down for Steve, who unlike Max was grateful for it.

"And so does Dart." Lucas picks up on where he was going with this.

"Yeah, its like what Mr. Clarke taught us, the hive mind." Mike brought up the science theory.

"Please say you know everything about this and I'm not going to have to call him." Lyn pleads.

"We do." Lucas nods making her feel relieved. She was already scared and stress. She didn't want to be creep out too.

"What's a hive mind?" Steve asks. Max was grateful for it. She didn't want Dustin and Mike to think she was stupider than they already did.

"A collective consciousness, it's a super-organism." Dustin explains.

"And this is the thing that controls everything. It's the brain." Mike point to the shadow monster.

"Like the mind flayer," Dustin said. Mike gasp, it was so clear he didn't know why he didn't see it earlier. Lucas snaps his fingers before pointing at him.

"The what?" Max, Lyn, and Steve asked.

"Lyn get everyone into the kitchen. We are going to find Will's dungeon and dragon manual." Mike orders as he went over to Will's bookshelf.

She nods her head and ran out of the room. She went to the living room where everyone else was. "Come to the kitchen, the boys got something." She told the room. She didn't stay to answer any questions. She turns around to make her way to the kitchen herself.

"What's going on?" Nancy was the first to enter.

"I don't really know. Mike told me to gather everyone up." She looks them over. From Joyce and Jonathan's distraught faces, she hopes that this idea the boys had worked.

Mike came in with his party and Steve behind him. "The mind flayer," He drops the manual down. It was open to a page with a man that had a squid head on it.

"What the hell is that?" Hopper asks.

"It's a monster from an unknown dimension. It's so ancient that it doesn't even know its true home. Okay, it enslaves races of other dimensions by taking over their brains using its highly-developed psionic powers." Dustin explains.

"Oh, my God, none of this is real. This is a kids' game." Hoppers scoff.

"And a few years ago, you would have said the same thing about another universe filled with man-eating monster right under our feet. You don't get to shoot down ideas when your only one is to wait around for the government when they might not be coming to save us." Lyn glare at the chief. Hopper put his hands up in surrender. He knew to not get in between a mama bear and her cubs. It didn't mean that he believes the kids.

"And it's a manual. And it's not for kids. And unless you know something that we don't, this is the best metaphor..." Dustin points at the book.

"Analogy," Lucas corrects him.

"Analogy, that's what you're worried about? Fine. An analogy for understanding whatever the hell this is." Dustin glares at his friend for cutting him off.

"Okay, so this mind flamer thing flayer," Nancy looks down at the book.

"Mind flayer," Dustin corrects his first crush.

"What does it want?" Nancy ignores him correcting her.

"To conquer us, basically, it believes it's the master race," Dustin told them.

"Like the Germans?" Steve said. He was glad to have some understood in this supernatural mess.

"No, Steve that was the Nazis. Don't category a whole country as that evil shit." Lyn corrects him.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, the Nazis," He nods to her.

"If the Nazis were from another dimension, totally, it views other races, like us, as inferior to itself." Dustin shrugs.

"It wants to spread, take over other dimensions." Mike build on that thought.

"We are talking about the destruction of our world as we know it." Lucas let them know how dangerous this really was.

"That's great. That's great. That's really great. Jesus!" Steve steps away from the table to take a breath.

"Okay, so if this thing is like a brain that's controlling everything, then if we kill it" Nancy picks up the book.

"We kill everything it controls." Mike nods to her.

"We win." Dustin cheer like they already did it.

"Theoretically," Lucas wanted everyone to stay realistic about this.

"Great. So how do you kill this thing? Shoot it with Fireballs or something?" Hopper took the book from Nancy to read.

"No, no, no Fireballs. Uh, you summon an undead army, uh, because... because zombies, you know, they don't have brains, and the mind flayer, it... it likes brains." Dustin was explaining when he realizes how ridiculous he was sounding. "It's just a game." Lyn slams her palm into her forehead.

"What the hell are we doing here?" Hopper slams the book down on the table.

"I thought we were waiting for your military backup." Dustin mocks him.

"We are!" He yells at them.

"How are they going to stop this? You can't just shoot this with guns." Mike pointed out to the officer.

"You don't know that! We don't know anything!" Hopper yells at the kids.

"Yeah, we do know. When we were at the middle school last year, there was only one Demogorgon and all of the agents unload their clips on it. The monster wasn't even wounded." Lyn snaps at the stubborn man.

"We know the monsters are going to molt again," Lucas told the officer that waiting would literal only make their problems get bigger.

"We know that it's only a matter of time before those tunnels reach this town." Dustin points to the walls that had Will's map on it.

"They're right." Joyce croaked from her spot in the living room. They turn to the mother of the son the shadow monster was possessing.
"We have to kill it. I want to kill it."

"Me too, me too, Joyce, okay? But how do we do that? We don't

exactly know what we're dealing with here." Hopper walks over to talk some sense into her.

"No. But he does. If anyone knows how to destroy this thing, it's Will. He's connected to it. He'll know its weakness." Mike walked to the couch that Will was laying on.

"I thought we couldn't trust him anymore. That he's a spy for the mind flayer now." Max follows him into the living room.

"Yeah, but he can't spy if he doesn't know where he is." Mike points out.

"The shed," Jonathan said.

Hopper and Mike went out to give it a look over. The rest of them stood in the backyard waiting to see what they had to do. Hopper waves them over to start working.

Lyn helped Hopper throw everything out of the shed. Steve and Nancy were taping trash bags over the windows. She looks over at them whispering to each other. She hoped that they both found happiness, whether it be with each other or not. She let out a groan as she picks up a heavy box.

"You alright kid," Hopper asks her when he saw the box she picked up was marked tools.

"I live with Dustin and my mom. I do the heavy lifting," She walks out of the shed and throws the box down outside. Hopper watches her go. He took a big sigh and look up at the sky. For being the chief of a small town, he really didn't know anything. He had been to the Henderson house a few times when their mother was going hysterical over something insignificant. He never realized that she didn't have a husband. Now it made sense why he always saw the girl walking dogs for that vet. To him, there was nothing sadder than when a child had to pick up the slack for their parents.

"Hey, just because I do all the heavy lifting at home doesn't mean I'm going to do it here." She snaps the officers out of his thoughts. He chuckled shaking his head and grab the lawnmower to throw it out.

After getting everything out, they went inside to cover the whole shed up with wooden panels, tarps, blankets, towels, and anything else they could find. Will wouldn't be able to recognize where he was. Lyn was even wrapping newspaper around the chair they were going to tie Will too. Mike was setting up bright light to be pointed at him, so it would be harder for him to see.

Jonathan carried Will in and with help from Hopper. They were able to tie him to the chair. "Alright, you ready?" Hopper asks Joyce.

"Yeah," She nods her head. Everyone went back to the house to give Hopper, Joyce, Mike, and Jonathan some privacy.

Steve and Dustin were sitting down on the couch. Lyn was walking around looking at Will's map. "If these are the tunnel they got all over town, we are screwed." She sighs.

"Don't talk like that. We got a plan. We just have to stick to it." Steve scolds her, although he wasn't too sure about this plan either.

When the light flickered, Steve grabs his bat and rush to the kitchen. The Henderson siblings were right on his heels. They look out the kitchen window to the shed for any signs of trouble.

It was a while until Hopper came charging out with Joyce, Mike, and Jonathan behind him. He entered the house and grabs a notepad. "What happened?" Lyn ran to the kitchen table that Hopper sat down on.

"I think he's talking, just not with words." Hopper draws dots and lines.

"What is that?" Steve asks.

"Morse code," Everyone answers, making Steve looked up to wonder how everyone knew that.

"H-E-R-E." Hopper translated.

"Here," The middle school kids read.

"Will's still in there. He's talking to us." Hopper looks at Joyce when

he gave the good news.

Jonathan ran to his room to grab his stereo and tapes. He went back out to the shed. Mike grabs Will's walkie to sneak into the shed with him. Lyn put Dustin's walkie on the table.

"Dash, dot, dash, dot," She repeated for her brother to write.

"Yeah, got it," Lucas point to a letter on the translation chart that Will had in his room.

"C," Max told Nancy who wrote it down.

More beeps came over the walkie, "L" "O" "S" "E" "G" "A" "T" "E"

"Close gate." Everyone read out loud and jump when the phone rang.

"Shit. Shit." Dustin ran over to pick up and hang up the phone. When it rang again, Nancy rips it off the wall and throws it across the room.

"Do you think he heard that?" Max stood up from the table.

"It's just a phone. It could be anywhere. Right?" Steve agrees with her. Logic said that a phone ringing wouldn't tell him where he was, but her gut spoke differently.

The loud roar confirmed that they knew where Will was. "That's not good," Dustin said what everyone was thinking. They ran to look out the front window where the roars could be heard the loudest.

"Hey, get away from the windows!" Hopper came into the living room with a shotgun in each hand. They back away as Hopper went to look out the window before turning to them. "Do you know how to use this?" He held out the gun to Jon.

"What?" He backs away from the gun.

"Can you use this?" He repeated his question with more force.

"I can," Nancy said. Hopper throws it to her. Nancy and Hopper stood in front of everyone. Hopper had the shotgun pointed at the window while Nancy had hers aimed at the door. Steve with his bat and Lyn

with her crowbar were the next line of defense. In the back were Dustin holding the hairspray and lighter and Lucas with his slingshot.

"Where are they?" Lyn glare. The roars were beginning to come from all different directions.

The bush moving and the low growl made them turn their aim to the kitchen window. "What are they doing?" Nancy asks. Demogorgon wasn't known for their taunting, they attack and devour.

A loud noise brought their attention back to the front window. The Demogorgon gave out a few more roars before it let out a loud cry than it flew through the window. It landed limply on the floor.

"Holy shit," The Henderson sibling screams out.

"Is it dead?" Max asks. Hopper went over with his shotgun pointed at it and gave it a few kicks to the head. There was no snarling, hissing, or biting. Its head only fell back to the floor with a thud.

"Okay, now I'm scared of what killed it." Lyn gasps staring down at the dead monster.

The lock turn and the chain on the door fell off by itself. Everyone stay on guard not knowing what was about to attack them. Lyn drops her crowbar when El steps through the door. Mike steps in front of the group and stares at her in amazement.

17. The Gate

Mike and El ran to each other and embrace in a hug. "Aw." Lyn coos, letting the crowbar fall to her feet.

"I never gave up on you. I called you every night." Mike leaned back from the hug to tell her.

"Every night for 353 days, I heard." El nods her head.

"Why didn't you tell me you were there? That you were okay?" Mike narrows his eyes in confusion.

"Because I wouldn't let her," Hopper walks towards them. In confusion, Mike steps out of the away so Hopper could be next to El. "What the hell is this? Where have you been?" He asks her.

"Where have you been?" She shot his questions back at him. Instead of answering her, he pulls her into a hug.

"You've been hiding her. You've been hiding her this whole time!" Mike, finally realizing what was going on, gave Hopper a couple shoves to the back.

"Hey!" Hopper grabs Mike's jacket to stop him from shoving him again. "Let's talk. Alone." He drags him to another room.

Lyn ran over to give El a hug. "I'm so glad that you're okay." She sways her side to side.

"I miss you, big sis." She smiles up at the older girl.

"You always could melt my heart." Lyn cups her face and gave her a big kiss on the forehead.

Lucas and Dustin pull El away to give her a hug. "We missed you," Lucas told her. Lyn smile, it was always nice to see Lucas and El getting along since the beginning had been rocky. She hopes that soon it would be like this with Mike and Max.

"I missed you, too." El hugs them tightly.

"We talked about you pretty much every day," Dustin spoke into her ear. They let go of each other. Dustin gives El a smile.

"Teeth," El reaches out to pull on his bottom lip to see his fake teeth more clearly.

"What?" He pulls away from her hands to ask.

"You have teeth." She stares in amazement.

Lucas and Dustin share a smile. They miss El learning new things every day about the world they lived in.

"Oh. You like these pearls?" He purred at her the way that only his mother adored. Lucas shook his head. El leaned back and stared at him wondering what the purpose of that noise was.

"Eleven? Hey. Um, I'm Max. I've heard a lot about you." Max walked over to them and stuck her hand out, but El walks past her to give Joyce a hug.

"That's weird. El is normally happy about meeting new people." Lyn put a hand on Max's shoulder.

"She has been trapped in a cabin for a long time, only interacting with Hopper. She probably picks up the antisocial behavior from him." Lucas tried to make Max feel better, but she didn't look convinced.

They watch as Joyce took El to Will's room. When they came back out and went into the kitchen, everyone got up to follow them. "You opened this gate before, right?" Joyce points at the paper that had close gate written on it.

"Yes." El nods.

"Do you think if we got you back there, that you could close it?" Joyce asks.

Lyn held her breath as El stood there staring at Joyce. "Let's do this." El nods her head in determination.

"I'll be there with you every step of the way, just like the last time." Lyn went to stand on the other side of El.

"No, you stay here with the boys." El shook her head.

"No ways, we want to help you." Dustin took his place at the table by his sister.

"We want to go with you." Lucas went by his buddy side.

"Where are we going?" Hopper walks into the room with Mike by his side.

"I'm going to close the gate." El turns around to tell him.

Hopper let out a sigh as he leans against the wall. "It's not like it was before. It's grown, a lot. And, I mean, that's considering we can get in there. The place is crawling with those dogs."

"Demo-dogs," Dustin corrected him. Lyn let out a sigh, what did it matter what they called them.

"I'm sorry, what?" Hopper looks down at him.

"I said, uh, Demo-dogs. Like Demogorgon and dogs. You put them together, it sounds pretty badass," Dustin explains to the officer. Lyn let out another sigh, normally Dustin's ability to see the cool side of anything humored her, but now wasn't the time or the place.

"How is this important right now?" Hopper cut off the hyperactive teenager.

"It's not. I'm sorry." Dustin shook his head and look away from the man.

"I can do it." El looks at Hopper knowing he would be the one to object.

"You're not hearing me." Hopper glares at his stubborn adopted daughter.

"I'm hearing you. I can do it." El matches his glare. Lyn's eyes were

darting back and forth between the two like she was watching a tennis match.

"Even if El can, there's still another problem. If the brain dies, the body dies." Mike said, making everyone look at him.

"I thought that was the whole point," Max asked, not seeing what the problem was.

"It is, but if we're really right about this... I mean, if El closes the gate and kills the mind flayer's army..." Mike trails trying to get his words together to make his point.

"Will's a part of that army," Lucas's eyes went wide in realization.

"Closing the gate will kill him." Mike nods his head. Lyn looks down at her feet, feeling defeated. She wonders if the monster was smart enough to possess Will because he knows them, the only group who was willing to fight him, wouldn't kill Will or if Will was the only one he could reach because he's been to the Upside Down before.

Joyce walks out of the kitchen and to Will's room. Lyn moves to follow her to make sure she didn't do anything drastic. Everyone must have had the same concern because they were following after her too.

"He likes it cold." Joyce looks over at the open window.

"What?" Hopper looks down at her concern.

"It's what Will kept saying to me. He likes it cold. We keep giving it what it wants." Joyce went over to close the window. Lyn, who was standing by the fan turn it off.

"If this is a virus, and Will's the host, then...." Nancy looked down at Will lying down lifeless on the bed. He was pale and his skin was sticking to his bone. If it wasn't for his chest going up and down, Lyn would have thought he was dead.

"Then we need to make the host uninhabitable." Jon finishes the thought for her.

"So if he likes it cold..." Lyn said but wasn't able to finish the sentence because of how much pain she knew Will was going to go through to get the monster out of him.

"We need to burn it out of him." Joyce looked down at her son. Part of being a mother was that you did whatever to protect your kids even if it would bring them pain. For a normal mother that would mean making them take medication when they were sick or taking them to the doctor to get their shots. Joyce wasn't dealing with a normal son. She was dealing with a possessed one. She would do whatever it took to get back her normal son.

"We have to do it somewhere he doesn't know this time." Mike tried to think of a place that Will didn't know.

"Yeah, somewhere far away," Dustin nods his head in agreement.

"I got a cabin that no one knows about. It's where El and I have been living." Hopper told the room.

"I'll take him." Jon stood up.

"Be careful." Nancy hugs him tightly. Hopper picks Will up. Jon pulled away from the hug and they stare into each other's eyes for a few seconds.

"I will." He promises her and took his keys out of his jacket pocket to follow Hopper outside. Joyce was right on their heels.

"You okay?" Lyn looks over at Steve with pity, to have to watch the girl he loves with someone else on the same day she broke up with him.

"I'm okay, I'm great." He scoffs and shrugs.

"I don't think anyone doing great right now." Lyn shook her head at him.

"It doesn't matter whether Jonathan was there or not. It wouldn't have worked out. At least she's happy." Steve gave another shrug and a weak smile.

"I'm going to look for something to board up the house with." Nancy walks outside.

"I'll go with her." Steve follows her out.

"The apocalyptic could be upon us and there still a disgusting romance in the air." Max stuck her tongue out.

"Are you talking about Lucas and you?" Lyn let out a laugh at Max's shocked face. "Thanks, kid. I need that. Come on, I know where the ice cream sandwich is hidden." She pats her on the back and led her to the kitchen.

Nancy and Steve were digging through the trash and pulling out things that could board up the windows. "You should go with him." He nods towards the Byers car.

"What?" She looks up at him shocked. She thought he was going to want to talk about them getting back together, so she was surprised when he brought up another guy. Not just any guy, but the guy that she had sex with last night.

"With Jonathan," He told her like that was what she was confused about.

"No, I'm... I'm not just going to leave Mike." Nancy concentrated on digging through the trash.

"No one's leaving anyone. I may be a pretty shitty boyfriend, but it turns out I'm actually a pretty damn good babysitter." Steve went over to help her pick up something that was too heavy for her.

"Steve." She shook her head, looking up at him with sad eyes. She never meant to hurt him, she wishes she did things differently.

"It's okay, Nance, it's okay," Steve reassured her. He loves for her was pure. He wanted her to be happy no matter what. He could see now that they would have never worked out. Even if the Upside Down never happened, eventually Nancy would have gotten tired of the partying and his snobby friends. Even though he gave up his popularity and friends for her, he regrets nothing. He actually would

always be thankful to her for helping him become a man he could be proud of.

"Steve, you weren't a shitty boyfriend, you just weren't for me. But, I know a girl you're perfect for." She nods towards the house.

"Rosalyn's a friend." He shook his head.

"The best romance comes out of friendship. It's okay, Steve." She smiles at him.

"Stop with the cliché and go to him." He waves his hand.

"Thanks, Steve," She ran past him to get to the car before Jon drove away.

"I love you, El. Now go kick some ass." Lyn pulls the girl into a hug. "Hurry back, I need to get the grease out of your hair and get you into some cuter clothes." She let her go.

"I'll be as fast as I can." She nods to her. "I love you, too." She adds on when she realized she didn't say it back.

Mike steps in between them. "I'll walk you to the car." He grabs her hand. They walk out the door together.

After the sounds of the cars pulling out of the driveway, Mike and Steve came back into the house. Lucas and Max were sitting in the hallways. Mike went to sit in Will's room.

"We should preserve this? Lyn help me carry this into the kitchen, we'll put it in the fridge for now." Dustin stood over the Demo-dog's dead body.

"Ew, no. I'm not touching that. You are not going to do that to Ms. Byers's fridge. Have some respect." She glares at her brother.

"This is a scientific discovery." He points at the dead body.

"It's already been discovered. It's just not publically known." She sat down on the couch and pick up an X-men comic that was on the

table.

Dustin let out a sigh when his sister began reading the comic. "Steve, help me." He turns to the other person in the room.

"What, no." He shook his head.

"I'm doing this with your help or not. It's not like you have anything else to do." Dustin grabs the thing's legs and tries to drag it. He didn't even move it an inch.

"Alright, I'll help. Don't give yourself a hernia." Steve went over and grab its' arms. Lyn watches from over the comic as they carried the demo-dog that was wrapped up in a blanket into the kitchen.

Lyn hops off the couch when she heard things being thrown around. "What the hell are you two doing?" She storms into the kitchen.

"We have to make room." Dustin throws a container of food into the sink.

"Can you be careful?" She grabs the carton of eggs from him and put it on the table. "I'll do it." She pushed him out of the way. She organized it by putting the things that need to be in the fridge like milk and eggs on the shelves on the door while leaving out things that wouldn't spoil on the table like soda.

"I'll do this part." Dustin took out the shelves and throws them on the floor.

"Dustin!" Lyn growls at him.

"Alright, it should fit now." He turns around to two unimpressed faces.

"Is this really necessary?" Steve sighs. He was now holding the dead demo-dog like it was a sleeping child.

"Yes, it is, okay? This is a groundbreaking scientific discovery. We can't just bury it like some common mammal, okay? It's not a dog." He snaps. He didn't get why people didn't understand that through this body they could learn more about this creature. They would be

able to find out its weakness and thought process.

"All right, all right, all right," He sighs, wanting Dustin to shut up already. "But you're explaining this to Mrs. Byers, all right?" He told him as he shoves it into the fridge. "Christ. Help me out." He curses when he realized it was a snug fit.

"What am I supposed to do?" Dustin looks for a spot he could squeeze in to help Steve push it in.

"Get the door, man." He snaps.

"Alright, I got the door." He moves to shut the door as Steve gave it one last shove to stay in and move out of the way quickly.

"Ew," Lyn grimace when she saw that a lot of the things sticky saliva was all over Steve's arms.

"Come here and give big papa a hug." He walks over to her with his arms out.

"If you touch me, we'll be burying you in the backyard like a dog!" Lyn ran away from him. She ran into the living room where Max and Lucas were cleaning up the glass from the broken window while Mike was pacing in the background.

"I'm washing my hands," Steve yells at her retreating form.

"Mike, would you just stop already?" Lucas watches his friend go back and forth with concern.

"You weren't in there, okay, Lucas? That lab is swarming with hundreds of those dogs." Mike stops pacing to yells at his friend. Lucas didn't know what he was feeling. The girl he cared about was right next to him.

"Demo-dogs!" Dustin enters the room to correct him.

"The chief will take care of her," Lucas told him. The guy could take out multiple FBI agents at a time.

"Like she needs protection," Max scoffs as she sweeps the glass into

the dustpan.

"I agree, she a real-life Jean Grey. You've seen what she did to those full-grown Demogorgons last time. These babies would be like a walk in the park for her." Lyn went over and wave the comic book she was reading around in the air.

"This isn't a comic book and El can't be reborn." Mike shook his head.

"Listen, dude, a coach calls a play in a game, bottom line, you execute it." Steve came in with a hand towel to dry off his arms.

"Okay, first of all, this isn't a stupid sports game. And second, we're not even in the game. We're on the bench." Mike argues against him. Lyn smiles and sat on the couch to enjoy the show. Steve was about to find that these weren't regular kids who argue with only feelings. These kids came with facts, well thought out theories, and feelings.

"So my point is...." Steve started but wasn't sure what his point was anymore. Lyn shook her head. He was defeated before he could even stand up from the bench. "Right, yeah, we're on the bench, so, uh, there's nothing we can do." He throws the hand towel over his shoulder.

"That's not entirely true. I mean, these Demo-dogs, they have a hive mind. When they ran away from the bus, they were called away." Dustin could never pass up an opportunity to correct someone. Lyn leans forward in her seat to hear the plan.

"If we get their attention" Lucas follows Dustin thought process.

"Maybe we can draw them from the lab." Max looks back at him smiling.

"Clear a path to the gate." Mike began thinking about how they could get their attention.

"Yeah, and then we all die." Steve throws his hands in the air.

"That's one point of view." Dustin shrugs from behind him.

"No, that's not a point of view, man. That's a fact." Steve turn back to

look at him like he was crazy.

"I got it!" Mike ran to the doorway. The rest of them share a look before following him. "This is where the chief dug his hole. This is our way into the tunnel." He bent down to point to the fork in the tunnel map that Will drew. He stood up and led them to the area that was a walkway between the kitchen and the living room. "So here, right here. This is like a hub. So you got all the tunnels feeding in here. Maybe if we set this on fire..." He kneels down to put his hands down on the large blue patch of papers on the ground.

"Oh, yeah? That's a no." Steve shook his head and points his finger to the ground.

"The mind flayer would call away his army." Dustin agrees with the plan.

"They'd all come to stop us." Lucas was excited to be able to help.

"We circle back to the exit." Mike continues with the plan.

"By the time they realize we're gone." Lyn realizes that with this plan they wouldn't have to fight them. It was brilliant.

"Guys!" Steve tries to interrupt them.

"El would be at the gate." Max smiles.

"Hey. Hey! Hey! This is not happening." Steve claps his hands and yells at them to get their attention.

"But..." They stutter out to get shut down again.

"No, no, no, no, no. No buts. I promised I'd keep you shitheads safe, and that's exactly what I plan on doing. We're staying here, on the bench. And we're waiting for the starting team to do their job. Does everybody understand?" Steve crosses his arms over his chest.

"This isn't a stupid sports game." Mike glares up at him from his spot on the floor.

"I said does everybody understand that? I need a yes." He stares all of

them down.

"O ye, of little faith," Lyn walks over to put her hands on his shoulders. A loud engine revving and rock music playing loudly stop her from continuing to try to persuade him.

Max ran to the window at the familiar sound. "It's my brother. He can't know I'm here. He'll kill me. He'll kill us" She gave Lucas a pointed look.

The tires screech from the abrupt stop he made and the music cut off. "I'll go out there." Lyn walks towards the door.

Steve grabs her hand. "No, I'll go out there."

"What, no. He might swig on you if he's that mad." She pulls her hand from his.

"What are you going to do? Distract him in the backseat. I'll go out there." Steve walks to the door. Lyn follows after him. "Stay here." He told her before going outside. Lyn grabs the door before it could close completely, so she could watch from that small opening.

"Am I dreaming, or is that you, Harrington?" Billy got out of his car with a cigarette in his mouth.

"Yeah, it's me. Don't cream your pants." Steve rolls his eyes and walks down the porch steps.

Billy took off his leather jacket and throws it in the car before slamming his door. "What are you doing here, amigo?" He walks over to Steve.

"I could ask you the same thing, amigo." Steve mocks him as he meets him in the middle. It reminds Lyn of an old western standoff.

"Looking for my stepsister, a little birdie told me she was here." He said with his cigarette dangling from his lips.

"Huh, that's weird. I don't know her." Steve shakes his head.

"Small? Redhead? Bit of a bitch." He put his thumb and pointer

fingers up. He made them almost touch to show how tiny she was.

"Doesn't ring a bell, sorry, buddy." Steve shrugs.

"You know, I don't know, this..." Billy took the cigarette out of his mouth and took a step closer to Steve. "This whole situation, Harrington, I don't know. It's giving me the heebie-jeebies" He clicks his tongue.

"Oh, yeah? Why's that?" Steve cocks his head to the side like he was concern.

"My 13-year-old sister goes missing all day. And then I find her with you in a stranger's house. And you lie to me about it." He took another drag from the cigarette.

"Man, were you dropped too much as a child, or what? I don't know what you don't understand about what I just said. She's not here." Steve let out a few bitter chuckles.

"Then who is that?" Billy points with his cigarette to the living room where the kids must have been watching from a window.

"Shit." Lyn curses. She ran out when Billy pushes Steve to the ground.

"I told you to plant your feet." He kicks Steve in the ribs.

"Billy! Billy! I'm sorry, this is my fault." She grabs Billy's arm to stop him from kicking Steve. "Max wanted to sleepover. I told her she could if she called her parents. She tried calling over and over but the line was busy. So, I told her that she could try again later. I guess I forgot about it. I'm sorry if I got you in any trouble." She pulls him flush against her.

"You were going to let my sister have a sleepover with a bunch of boys." He grabs her chin to make her look up at him.

"No, she would have slept in the room with me." Lyn shook her head.

"Well, I'll go grab Max and we can have a sleepover at my house. Get in the car." He grabs her arm tightly and throws her back towards the Camaro. Her legs hit the grill of the car and her back slam against the

hood knocking the wind out of her.

"Fucking prick, I hope I dented it." She hisses getting up from the car. She notices the front door was wide open and Steve was getting up. "Come on, Steve." She helps him get on his feet and pull him back into the house.

Lyn gasps at the frightening sight of Billy holding Lucas up against the wall by his jacket. "You're so dead, Sinclair! You're dead." He yells into the younger boy's face.

Steve pulls away from Lyn's hands and walks behind their deranged classmate. "No. You are." Steve spins Billy around by the shoulders and throws a punch to his face.

"Steve!" Max yells. She knew the scary thing about Billy wasn't just the violence he could dish out, but the violence that he could endure.

"Come here, honey." Lyn went over to pull Lucas to them. They gave him a group hug.

Billy let out a long set of chuckles and giggling as if Steve tickled him instead of punching him. "Looks like you got some fire in you after all, huh? I've been waiting to meet this King Steve everybody's been telling me so much about." He smiled in glee like blood wasn't dripping out of his nose.

"Get out." Steve pushes his chest. Billy stares at him for a second before taking a swing at Steve. He was able to dodge it and land a punch of his own that made Billy fall back on the kitchen table.

"Yes! Kick his ass, Steve!" Dustin cheers him on.

"Get him!" Mike joins the cheering.

"Murder the son of a bitch!" Dustin pumps his fist in the air.

"That's it, Steve!" Lucas jumps up and down.

The boys cheer him on as Steve seems to be landing most of the punches. The last punch Steve landed made Billy fall back into the kitchen sink. Billy reaches back and grabs a plate to smash it over

Steve's head, making him crouch down to cover his face.

"Billy!" Max and Lyn scream.

"Holy shit!" Mike screams. Steve was stumbling around as Billy advance on him.

"Shit!" Dustin had to duck to avoid Billy's next punch that connected with Steve's jaw. Steve stumbles back into the living room.

"No one tells me what to do!" Billy headbutts Steve.

"Billy that's enough, you made your point." Lyn moves in between them.

"Really, because you're not in the car where I told you to be, now get going! If I have to carry you there when I'm done with this, you'll be riding in the trunk!" He shoved her away before turning back to Steve. He pushed Steve on his back and straddled his chest to rain down punches on his face.

"You're going to kill him," Dustin screams.

"Stop! Stop! WE'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, JUST STOP!" Lyn begs him, not wanting her best friend to die.

Max pushes her way through them with a tranquilizer shot that was being used on Will in her hand and she slams it into Billy's neck. She pushes the drug into his veins.

He got up and tower over his stepsister. Lyn pushes Max behind her. "What the hell is this?" He pulls the needle from his neck. "Where is that little shit, Rosalyn? What did she do?" He asked as his vision blurs. He felt weaker by the second. Lyn took a few steps back as he advanced on her.

"She was helping you calm down." Lyn reaches out to push him. He falls backward, giggling as he lands on the floor.

Max grab Steve's bat and raise it over her shoulder like she was at the plate. "From here on out, you leave me and my friends alone. Do you understand?" She threatens him.

"Screw you." He hissed at her.

She swung the bat down. The nails making an impressive sound as it lands an inch away from his groin. He looked down with fright on his face for the first time in the Byers house. "Say you understand! Say it! Say it!" She lifts the bat back up.

"I understand." He groans

"What?" She gasps, amazed that he actually said it.

"I understand." He said before passing out.

Max drops the bat and grabs his keys from his pocket. "Let's get out of here." She turns to her astonished audience.

"Everyone grab your backpack. The boys will get Steve into the car." Lyn nod to the boys that were still in shock by Max going mad on her stepbrother.

"I'll get your backpack." Dustin nod to his sister before running into the kitchen. Lucas and Mike ran to the kitchen with him.

"You can drive that?" She nods to the keys in Max's hand.

"Yeah, but I only practiced in parking lots." Max nods.

"Let's good enough, there aren't many cars on the road this time of night. I got to fix his face." She nods to Steve.

"I got this." She nods, feeling on top of the world since standing up to Billy.

"Here," Dustin passes his sister her backpack and an ice bag. Lucas grabs Steve's feet while Dustin grabs under his arms. Mike clears their path for them. They got Steve into the backseat of Billy's car.

Lyn slid in and put Steve's head and shoulders into her lap. "What are you doing? Aren't you driving?" Mike asks.

"Max got it." She points to the girl getting into the driver's seat.

"Max is driving?" Dustin screams out.

"She knows how and I'm the only one who knows first aid. Do you want Steve's face to get infected?" Lyn glares at them.

The boys share a look before getting in the car. Lucas took the passenger seat. Lyn uses all her strength to lift Steve up so Mike and Dustin could slide in. Dustin had Steve's torso on his lap and Mike had his legs and feet on his.

Max started up the car. Lyn pulls the first aid kit out of her bag. "Here, shine the light on his face." She hands the flashlight to Dustin. He did as he was told as Lyn use an alcohol wipe to clean the dried blood off.

Max pull out of the driveway, as Lyn put disinfectant and bandages on his face. "Nancy?" Steve groan, staring at Mike in confusion. The expression was returned to him by Mike. Lyn giggles at his mix up while holding the ice bag to his face.

"No, don't touch it." Dustin grabs Steve's hand that was about to touch his bleeding forehead. The cut from the plate was the only thing Lyn was still trying to get to stop bleeding. "Hey, buddy. It's okay. You put up a good fight. He kicked your ass, but you put up a fight. You're okay." He tried to soothe him.

Steve looks upfront when Lucas started talking. "Okay, you're going to keep straight for half a mile, then make a left on Mount Sinai." He gave Max's directions.

"What's going on?" He looks at the driver's seat when he saw red hair. Max turned around to look at him. "Oh, my God!" He gasps.

"Just relax. She's driven before." Lyn pushes him back down when he tried to sit up.

"Yeah, in a parking lot," Mike rolls his eyes.

"Not helping right now." Lyn glares at him. Steve sat up pushing Dustin into Mike. "Steve, you have to calm down." She kept the ice bag on his head.

"Hey, Buddy. Mike and Lucas wanted to leave you behind. We argue about it in the kitchen, but I promise you wouldn't freak out. So be cool." Dustin nods along.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. What's going on? Oh, my God. No! Whoa! Stop the car. Slow down." He screams as Max speeds up.

"I told you he'd freak out." Mike throws Dustin a glare. The guy was only going to try and stop them.

"Stop the car!" Steve screams.

"Everybody shut up! I'm trying to focus!" Max turns around to yell at them.

"Oh, wait, that's Mount Sinai. Make a left." Lucas points to the left.

"What?" Max gasps at him.

"Make the next left." He screams. Max didn't have time to slow down, so she made a hard left making everyone lean towards their right. She ran over someone's mailbox. Lucas let out a high pitch girly scream. Steve shoves his head into Lyn's neck as he sobs in fear. Mike, Lyn, and Dustin were holding onto their seats for dear life. They let out a breath of relief when she made it.

"Oh, she did it. Good job Max, going that speed and keeping control of the car, that amazing." She leans forward to pat the girl on the shoulder.

"Thanks." She smiles back at her.

"Why aren't you driving?" Steve screams at Lyn when she was back in her seat.

"I'm the only one who knows first aid." She rolls her eyes at his drama queen act.

"What does it matter if my face gets clean up if she kills us in a car crash?" Steve throws his hands in the air for extra effect.

"Did you see her make that turn, she's fine? Now hold still, I got to

finish cleaning the cut on your forehead." She pushes him down, so he was back in her lap. She fixes up the rest of Steve's face as Max drove. She was done when Max stops the car.

"Whoa! That was incredible." Mike admitted.

"I told you, Zoomer." Max smile smugly. The boys got out of the car and ran to the trunk that Max pops open.

Steve falls out of the car. Lyn step over his body. "Guys... oh, no, guys. Hey, where do you think you're going? What are you, deaf? Hello? We are not going down there right now. I made myself clear. Hey, there's no chance we're going to that hole, alright? This ends right now!" He screams at them as they got ready.

Lyn ties a bandana around her head, so the only her eyes were showing. She put on a pair of goggles and thick gloves she wore to work on the car. She throws her backpack on. She slides the hairspray in her back pocket and kept the lighter in her hand. She was going to wait for Steve and Dustin but when she saw Lucas, Max, and Mike walking to the hole in the ground, she follows after them.

"I'll go first." She ran in front of the three kids. She grabs the metal peg that had a rope tied to it from Lucas and drives it into the ground. She throws the rope in and waited to see if there would be a thud. She eventually heard it. It was small and in the distance but it was there. She slides down the rope, being careful to keep her legs that were only clad in fishnet leggings out so she wouldn't get burnt.

Her feet touch the ground. "Holy shit," She gaps at the giant tunnels. They were so big that she could stretch her arms above her head and still not be close to touching the top. She pulls her flashlight out of her bag to look around to make sure there wasn't anything lurking around. "Come on down." She calls.

She kept watch as one by one they slide down the rope. "Holy shit," Steve gasps when he looks around the large tunnels that were under the city.

Lyn turns around to smile at him. "Good to see you join the party, buddy." She pats his shoulder.

"Yeah, I'm pretty sure it's this way." Mike shines his light down one of the tunnels after looking at the map.

"You're pretty sure, or you're certain?" Dustin asks him.

"I'm 100% sure. Just follow me and you'll know." Mike went to walk in the tunnel, but Steve stops him.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hey, hey, hey, hey. I don't think so." He yells out, stopping Mike from continuing on.

"What?" He snaps at the older teen, who he still thought they should have left at the Byers.

"Any of you little shits die down here, I'm getting the blame. Got it, dipshit, so from here on out, I'm leading the way. Come on, let's go." He grabs the map and walks into one of the tunnels. Mike and Dustin were fast on his heels. "Come on. Hey, a little hustle." He yells back when he saw that the rest of them weren't moving.

"Let's hope he can read the map." Lyn sighs and waves for Lucas and Max to go in front of her.

They follow Steve through the tunnels. "God," Lucas sighs when his flashlight accidentally went up when he went over one of the many bumps down there.

Max and Lyn move there lights up to see what he saw. "What is this place?" Max whispers. Lyn grimaces at seeing the red flesh like things on the ceiling. She wasn't sure what it was, but it reminded her of the pumping organs that she would see in health class. The black dust that was everywhere shines whatever the flashlights went making it hard to see.

"Guys, come on. Keep moving." Steve turned around to yell at them. Lucas, Max, and Mike hurry along after him. Lyn was behind Dustin. He was stilling staring up at the ceiling.

"What the hell?" Dustin tilts his head. The things seem to be taking a deep breath as it grows bigger than it threw up all over him.

"Shit!" Lyn screams and helps her brother to his feet.

"Help! Help! Help!" Dustin stumbles forward with his sister's help.

"Dustin!" His three peers ran back for him.

"What happened?" Steve looks over at Lyn.

"The thing threw upon him." She points to the organ in the ceiling.

"Gross!" Max gags.

"It's in my mouth! Some got on my mouth! Shit!" Dustin screams as he knelt over coughing and spitting on the ground. He took a few deep breathes before looking up at them, "I'm okay."

"You serious?" Lyn glares at him. She thought the thing might have poisoned him or something. But, come to find out he was only freaking out.

"Very funny, man. Nice, very nice," Steve shook his head before continuing on through the tunnels.

"Jesus, what an idiot," Max shook her head and follow the older teen. Mike and Lucas were quick to continue on with their journey. Lyn yanks her brother up to his feet once again before going ahead.

"Hang on. Wait, wait." Dustin ran after them.

They continue on in silence until Steve stops in his tracking making the rest stop also. He looks down at the map before slowly creeping out of the tunnel. "Alright, Wheeler, I think we found your hub." He steps out. Lyn looks out to see a big round room that all the tunnels lead to.

"Let drench it," Mike said through clenched teeth. Lucas began spraying the ceiling with gasoline, while the rest of them pour it around the room. Lyn pours some around the ring of every tunnel except the one they were going to use.

When they were done every inch of the place was drenched in gasoline. "I'm empty." Lyn throws her container into one of the tunnels. She joins Max and Dustin that were waiting inside the tunnel they came from.

Mike was the last to join them. "You ready?" Steve looks back at them. He was kneeling in the front with a lighter in his hand.

"Yeah," Mike nods.

"Ready." Max got to her feet.

"Ready." Lucas and Lyn nod their heads.

"Light her up." Dustin cheers.

"I am in such deep shit." Steve pants and flicks the lighter on before throwing it into the hub. In the pitch darkness, the teens saw the blue flame surround the lighter before the whole room was shallow in red flames. Fear spike up in Lyn when tentacles sprout up from the ground. Demogorgon familiar cries of pain fill their ears. "Go, go, go!" Steve pushes them forward.

Lyn ran through the tunnel, trying to keep her feet off the ground as much as possible. She kept imaging a tentacle came through the ground to grab her. Lyn was in such a panic state she couldn't hear Steve encouraging them to keep going and Dustin screams of oh my god.

The only thing that took Lyn out of her state was when her fear came true when one of the tentacles grab Mike. "Help! Help! Help! Help!" He screams echoes through the tunnels.

Lyn ran back for him and grab under his arms to pull him, but the small tentacle proves to be stronger. "No, no, no." Tears ran down her face as she pulls even harder. Lucas and Dustin join in to pull him.

"Everybody back! Back!" Steve slams the bat down on the tentacle. It let go of Mike making Lyn feel like she could breathe again.

"You good?" Lucas pulls Mike up his feet.

"Is your leg okay? Shake it around for me." Lyn looks down at the leg that it grabbed. Mike shakes it to show that he wasn't injured.

"Guys, we got to go!" Steve screams. Lyn looks over to see a big demo-dog standing in front of them.

"Dart," Dustin step in front of the group. He lets out a little noise that was similar to purr at being called by his name.

"That could have been a coincidence. We can't see the butt, we don't know if that's Dart." Lyn grabs her brother's arm. At hearing its name again, it turns to her and wiggles his butt. "Just great, we're going to get eaten by your pet, Dustin." She sighs.

"Dustin, get back." They scream at him when he started inching forward.

"Trust me, please." Dustin put his hand up but didn't turn around. "Hey. It's me, it's me. It's just your friend, it's Dustin." He pulls down his bandana and pushes up his goggles. "It's Dustin, all right? You remember me?" He smiles. Dart crouch down as he inches closer. "Will you let us pass?" His answer was a large snarl as Dart open up his flower mouth to show the millions of large sharp teeth he now had.

"Bad Dart! Bad Dart!" Lyn screams making him close his mouth and hang his head.

"Okay, okay, I'm sorry. I'm sorry about the storm cellar. That was a pretty douchey thing to do. Are you hungry? Yeah," Dustin put his hands up to apologize and slowly took off his backpack and reach inside.

"He's insane," Lucas whispers.

"Don't," Mike warns.

"Shut up." Steve hisses.

"I've got our favorite. See? Nougat," Dustin held up a three musketeers bar. "Look at that, yummy. Here, all right? Eat up, buddy." He opens up the candy and throws it on the ground. Dart was eating it happily off the floor. Dustin waves them to sneak past, which they did as fast as they could. "There's plenty. I've got more." Dustin opens up another candy and drops it on the floor. He got up and walked around Dart to join them. Dart watches him as he did before going back to eating. "Goodbye, buddy," He smiles down at his

pet before putting his bandana and goggles back on.

"Come on." Lyn grabs his arm. She had to drag him along until they couldn't see Dart anymore. They were running to opening when the ground shook under them, knocking them all down. "Oh shit!" She gasps, pulling herself up.

"What was that?" Max uses the walls of the tunnel to pull herself to her feet.

The monsters roar echoes through the tunnel as it shook again. "They're coming." Mike gasps.

"Run! Run! Let's go! Let's go!" Steve led them back and through another tunnel. Luck and timing were on their side because there was the rope that they climb down on.

"There, there!" Lucas points to it like they didn't have eyes of their own.

"Come on! Let's go. Go, go, go! Let's go! Come on! Come on!" Steve grabs Max that was the closest to him and shoves her up the rope. The next to be pushed up was Lucas and then Mike.

"Oh shit." Steve and Lyn curse when the roaring got louder. A demo-dog's shadow was seen on the wall of the tunnel.

"Dustin gets up." She grabs her brother to push him up and when he was in reach Lucas and Mike pull him up.

"Steve, climb up." She grabs the bat from him.

"What? Are you crazy?" He glares at her.

"I've seen you climb the rope in gym class in record speed. I know you can do it. I've never been able to climb to the top. Just go. We both don't have to die." She pushes him towards the rope and lifted the bat over her head as the demo-dogs turn the corner.

"No one here is dying today." Steve pulls the crowbar from her backpack and lifts over his head. Demo-dog ran towards them. Lyn grips tightly to the bat ready to strike the first flower mouth that

came their way, but it never did. Lyn stares down in amazement when the worst thing the dogs did was bump into their legs as they ran past them. Steve pulls her close to make sure she didn't get knocked over and trampled by them. He held on tight until there weren't any dogs left.

"Come on, you're making it to the top today." He bent down and laces his fingers together and held out his hands' palms up. She put a foot into his hands and he hoisted her up. She climbs up until she felt four pairs of hands grab at her arms. She helps them as she crawls out of the hole in the ground.

"Stop offering to die for people." Dustin slaps her in the back of the head. Lyn pushes him away to help Steve who was trying to climb out of the hole. When he stood up the Camaro high beam turns on. They cover their eyes to prevent being blinded by the lights.

They put down their arms when the lights turn off. "Go Eleven." Mike pumps his fist in the air. Lyn and the rest of them join him as they jump up and down.

"Son of a bitch! Son of a bitch!" Dustin ran around the house.

"Where did you see it last," His mom was in her rocking chair cuddles with Tews, the Siamese kitten that Lyn got her as an early Christmas present.

"Right here, where I put it," Dustin went into the kitchen and move the cat food to find the paper bag.

"What's in there that's so important anyway? You look fabulous, baby." She smiles at him dressed up for the snowball at least from the waist up. He had on a dark blue plaid sports jacket, a light blue button-up underneath it, and a dark blue bow tie. From the waist down he was dress more casual in his brown jeans and white Ghostbusters sneakers.

"Need any help with that?" Lyn yells from her spot on the couch, where she was watching A Christmas Carol.

"No, I got it." He screams back as he ran to his room.

The door rang making Lyn run to open it. "Hey Steve, thanks again for taking Dustin. He thinks I'll embarrass him if I take him." She smiles at her best friend.

"It's no problem I like hanging out with the little man. And, let's be honest you would embarrass him." Steve laughs.

"I wouldn't mean to." She glares at him as she leans against the door frame. "So, I was thinking that after you drop him off, you could swing back over here and we could watch movies and eat pizza." She smiles. She knew it was a hard week for him since Jonathan and Nancy were publicly together now. They waited a little while out of respect for him. After Steve reassures them that they don't need to keep him in mind, they finally show up at school together.

"How many times do I have to tell you I'm not a girl? I don't watch romance movies, stuff my face, and cry my eyes out to get over someone." He rolls his eyes.

"We are watching action movies. Come on, I rented First Blood, Raiders of the Lost Ark, and Dirty Harry. Nothing is funnier than my mom dreamy sighing every time she sees Clint Eastwood." She wiggles her eyebrows.

"I'll like a meat lover's pizza. For the record you didn't convince me, Clint Eastwood did." He winks at her making her laugh.

"Come on in," She moves inside and wave to him. Steve shut the door behind him. "Dustin, Steve here to take you!" She yells up the hall.

Dustin ran out with his hair gelled back and style like Steve's. "Oh Dusty," Lyn grabs the camera to snap a picture of him.

"This is why you're staying home." Dustin walks around her. "Thank you for taking me, Steve." He nods to his friend.

"I got you, buddy. I love the hair." He fist bump with him before they walk out.

"Have a good time." Lyn waves to them. She went into the kitchen to

order the pizzas before she went back to the living room. She sat on the couch as the ghost of Christmas present paid Scrooge a visit.

"Our little boy is growing up. He doesn't need us to take care of him anymore." Claudia let out a sad huff. "But, you need me, don't you, baby." She coos at Tews.

Lyn stares at her mom and the kitten, feeling the yearning to take care of something. She shook her head and turns back to the TV. She didn't want to be like her mom, who constantly needed something to depend on her. She needed to start a new path in her life.

18. Wake Up Call

"Come on, I need to show you something." Dustin pulls Steve into the kitchen where all the boys were waiting for him. "Look at this." He pulls out a big serving bowl from the cabinet.

"What is this?" Steve pulls out a piece of paper. "Are all these numbers? I'm proud of you buddy." He patted the young boy on the back.

"These aren't mine." He slaps the older teen's hand off of him. "These are Lyn's. Boys give them to her at work when she walks the dogs." Dustin shook the bowl in his face.

"What?" Steve scream, feeling his heart sink to his stomach.

"This is your wake up call." Lucas hops off the counter he was sitting on and put a hand on each of Steve's shoulders. "Prom is two months away. It could be you or one of those guys." He nods his head to the bowl.

"If you wait until the last minute you'll be going as her friend, not her boyfriend." Mike pointed out there was no time to waste.

"I can't guys, alright. I ask her out a hundred times before and I got reject every time." Steve pulls away from Lucas, shaking his head at them.

"That was when you were douche bag Steve, now you're cool Steve." Mike reminds him.

"Just yesterday she was telling my mom, she's happy that I have you as a role model. But I think she meant we," Dustin wiggled his eyebrows. All the guys in the kitchen look at him with narrow eyes.

"Dude shut up, you're not helping." Lucas slaps his arm.

"You were supposed to get something to prove that she likes him back." Mike glare at his friend.

"You try to get that woman to tell you something she doesn't want to

tell you." Dustin defends himself.

"She likes you," Will spoke reminding everyone he was still in the room. "She stares at you a lot when you're not looking. She laughs at all your jokes and most of them aren't funny. She always suggests for Dustin to invite you along. And, if she knows you're coming, then she dresses nicer." He had been noticed for a while now that Rosalyn was taking a liking to Steve.

"So, you're saying I have shot." Steve leaned back against the counter as he suddenly felt out of breath. To think the moment he has been waiting almost four years for was here.

Lyn enters the kitchen in her scrubs. "Morning guys," She waved to them as she went straight to the coffee machine. She pours herself a cup and turns back around to face them. "What are you gu.... I thought I told you to throw that away, Dustin." She was about to ask what their plans for today were when she saw the bowl of numbers. She took the bowl off the counter and dumps the numbers in the trash.

"So, you're not interested in any of those guys?" Steve mentally curses himself as his voice went a few pitches higher than normal.

"Of course not!" She turns to yell at him. He put his hands in the air, letting her know he wasn't trying to fight her. "It's so disgusting. What kind of sick-o pulls over, speaks vulgar to a woman, and gives her their number like it a million dollars? Some of these perverts don't even stop. They wolf whistle and throw their numbers out the window." She grimaces.

"Then why do you keep their numbers?" He tilts head in a way that reminds Lyn of a puppy. Every time he did it, she just wanted to squeeze his cheeks.

"To get the boy to write their numbers on the wall in men's restroom to call for a good time, but I've done that already." She pours some coffee onto the number, hoping that would be enough to keep her brother from digging them out of the trash again.

Steve laughs at hearing her explanation. She laughs along with him

as they imagine the kind of calls the men got. When the laughter dies out, they notice that the boys left them. "I wonder where they ran off to." Lyn ponders looking around.

"I have to ask you something." Steve blurted out. She watched as he took a deep breath. "I was wondering if you wanted to go on a date." He ran a hand through his hair.

"A date?" She croaked out.

"Yeah, I figure we could go to the new mall." He shrugs like his heart was beating rapidly in his chest awaiting her answer. She stares at him not knowing what to say. "You can say no, it's fine. It won't ruin our friendship." He reassured her. If she didn't want to go out he didn't want it to ruin the close friendship that they had.

"Can I give you my answer after work?" She said it so quickly that Steve wouldn't have heard her clearly if he wasn't focused on her like he was.

"Yeah, sure," He nods, relieved that it wasn't a rejection.

"Okay, I'll call your house after." She gave him a kiss on the cheek and ran out of her house. She turns Darling on and pulls out of the driveway. "I can't believe I wanted to say yes. I want to go on a date with Steve Harrington. Oh my god, I want to go out with my best friend. I want to go on a date with one of Dustin's best friends." She said it in so many different ways as she drove to work.

Lyn went through the motion of her job in a daze. She still couldn't believe that she was so stumped by Steve asking her out. She wanted to scream yes when he asked, but there were other factors to consider. She had to put the needs of the many over the wants of the few.

"Alright, what wrong?" Dr. Penelope Myung stood in front of her youngest employee with her hands on hips.

"I'm fine. Why did you ask?" She put the Rottweiler back in his cage.

"If everything is fine then why did you take Bruce on his third walk

in a row?" She smugly smiles at her.

Lyn stares down at the dog that was passed out on the dog bed. "I'm sorry. I guess I'm a little distracted today." She shrugs.

"I know. I want to know why. Come on. Don't make me have to twist your arm." She grabs the girl's arm to pull her into the break room.

"Steve asks me out." She drops into one of the chairs around the table.

"That is a problem, why? I thought he does that all the time." Penelope fills up two cups of coffee.

"It's been a year since he has. Things are different now. Thanks." She took a cup from her boss.

"I would think you liking him now, would make it better but you look like you swallow a lemon." She took a seat across from the troubled teen.

"I do not like him." Lyn shook her head furiously.

"Your denial is adorable." The doctor giggles.

"Does everyone know?" She slumps down in the chair.

"It's hard not to. The way you smile every time you talk about him. You talk about him a lot lately." She smiles at the teen's blushing cheeks.

"Well, he's over at the house almost every day now. I'm not obsessing." She defends herself. She did not want to be known as some boy crazy teenager.

"I didn't say you were. Now, what is the problem?" She pushes them back to the matter at hand.

"What if things don't work out with Steve and me? Then, I would have ruined a male figure for Dustin to look up to." She admits to one of her worries.

"Dustin came in with your mother for Tews checkup. The way he gushes about Steve, you should worry that his image of you will be ruined if things don't work out with Steve." She chuckled, remembering how he went on about Steve teaching him how to smolder.

"I guess if Dustin doesn't mind. But, it wouldn't be fair for me to go out with Steve or anyone, not with my mom." Lyn took a sip of coffee.

"Why, cause of your mom?" She arches her eyebrow.

"I will probably be taking care of her for the rest of her life. What man is going to be okay with their in-laws living with them?" She sighs. Sometimes it felt like she was destined to be alone.

"In a lot of cultures that the way of life," Dr. Myung was not going to let her leave the break room until she agrees to go on this date.

"Not in this one." She shot her boss an unimpressed look.

"That's not for you to decide, it's for Steve. Tell him your concerns if he agrees with them then you stay friends. If he doesn't, then you owe it to both of you to give it a shot." Penelope stood up before her employee that she come to think of as family could protest anymore.

"Fuck, I have a shitty aim." Lyn curses herself as the pebbles hit the wall below Steve's window. She couldn't believe that she was doing this. She went home and picks the phone up to call him like she said she would. But, she couldn't dial the number. She couldn't talk to him about this over the phone. She needs to see his facial expression to know that he was really fine with what she was going to tell him.

She would have rung the doorbell, but she didn't want to face Steve's snobby parents. Last time she did, they made offhand comments about her clothes and weight. They didn't get to go any further than that, because Steve put his foot down.

"One last throw, if this doesn't make it I'll deal with the snobs." She picks up a few more pebbles. She knew he was in there, she could see his light on. She groaned when it went a little too much to the right,

hitting the wall by the window. She drags her feet to the door.

"What the hell are you doing?" Steve was leaning out his window to stare down at her.

"OH, Steve." She looks up smiling at him. She didn't think she was throwing it hard enough to be heard through the thick walls. "Come down, I want to talk to you." She waves for him.

"Okay, alright, I'll be right down." He pops his head back inside. He throws on a pair of sweatpants and a t-shirt. He was getting ready for bed, so he only had his boxers on. He walks past his parents who didn't look up from the wheel of fortune to notice him going by. He went out the front door to see Lyn waiting for him. "What's up?" He closes the door and wipes his hands on his sweatpants that went clammy on him. He knew she was here to give him her answer, he wasn't sure if he was ready to hear it.

"My answer is yes, but I have a condition and a warning." She blurted out. It seems to be the only way she knew how to deliver any news.

"Okay, I'll take the condition first." He shrugs. He never had a girl give him a condition and a warning before a first date, but that was Lyn for you. Everything was a unique experience with her.

"No matter what happens between us even if it gets really ugly, you can't abandon Dustin." Lyn made sure to keep a stern voice to let him know this wasn't negotiable.

"I would never do that to Dustin." Steve shook his head, looking offended that she thought that he would do that. "What's your warning?" He let out a sigh, trying to remember that she wasn't being rude to him. She was being protected over her brother.

"It's a little presumptuous, but the first date is what leads to a more serious relationship. I would rather you know this now than later because it could be a deal-breaker." She looks over at Steve to make sure she wasn't scaring him too much. If anything he looks to be getting a little impatience with melodramatic, but he didn't seem put off in any type of way. "I'm a package deal. I come with my mom and Dustin." She let out a big breath after she laid it out there.

"Is that it? Cause I knew that already." Steve shrugs, not understanding why she was making a big deal of it. He loves her brother and mom. They made him feel like family more than his own did.

"Do you get what that means? I won't be leaving Hawkins, at least not until Dustin graduates. Even if I move after that my mom would have to come along with me. She's never going to be able to support herself, especially when the child support and alimony checks stop. She's going to be with me for the rest of her life." She narrows her eyes at him. She couldn't believe that he was taking this so well, this was the shit that sometimes drove her crazy. The thoughts that made her feel like she was suffocating in her own skin to the point that she wanted to claw her way out. He was making like it was a walk in the park.

"So presumptuously speaking, I could have the coolest brother-in-law ever and the sweetest mother-in-law that will be cooking me delicious dinner for the rest of my life. Sounds like you come with a sweet deal. I think I would take you even if you were rotten." He wraps his arms around her waist to pull her close.

She wraps her arms around his neck to pull him down to push her lips on his. After the shock wore off for Steve, he began kissing back making it intense. "I'm free all Saturday." Lyn pulls back enough to tell him.

"I'll pick you up at noon." He told her before connecting their lips again.

Lyn gave herself a look over in the mirror. She wanted to be perfect for her first date. She was wearing a high waist acid wash fitted jean skirt that ends at her knees. She had on a tank top with an acid wash jean jacket over it. She wonders if she was doing too much with the five necklaces. They were all different lengths, so they layered nicely. The first was a black chain choker, follows by three different lengths black necklaces, and the last was the longest that had a black cross on it.

She reaches up to tightly her scrunchie that kept her hair up in a high

ponytail, leaving two loose pieces of hair to frame her face. She used a curling iron to give her hair the right amount of waves. She kept her makeup natural with pink lip gloss, pink blush and went light on the mascara and eye shadow.

"You look beautiful," El told her from her spot on the bed.

"Really? I look casual enough to be going to the mall, but still good enough to make his jaw drop." She turns around to the two girls.

"Oh, his jaw will be hitting the floor." Max gave her two thumbs up.

"Good, this date is over three years in the making." She took a deep breath, not believe she was so nervous. She tried to tell herself it was like hanging out with him, which she did a hundred times before. But, this was different, this was a date. There would be holding hands and kisses.

"Steve's here," Dustin yells to his sister.

"Here you go." El passes the black leather purse to her.

"Thank you." She swings it over her shoulders. "Thanks for helping me get ready." She smiles at the two.

"You're welcome, now go get them, tiger," Max stood up to push her out the door.

Lyn felt her heart pounding harder in her chest every time her white Adidas sneakers touch the ground. She turns the corner to see Steve in a pair of jeans and a black long sleeve shirt. "Lyn, go over there by him." Dustin shoves her.

She rolls her eyes and walks over to Steve. "You look pretty." Steve smile at her.

"Thank, you look good too. But, you always do." She winks at him.

"Okay, you can do your cheesy flirting later. Now, turn around to face the camera." Dustin demands. Lyn and Steve roll their eyes as they turn to him. "Alright, Steve put your arm around her. Big smiles you two. This will be the picture your kids look at years from now.

Let it years from now, okay Steve, I'm not ready to be an uncle yet." Dustin took picture after picture.

"You were worried that he wouldn't want us dating." Steve snickers into her ear.

"Okay, that's enough." Lyn snaps, not sure if she was talking about Dustin speaking or the picture taking.

"I always knew you would be a part of the family Steve, ever since I saw you two cuddle up on the couch last Halloween." Her mom gushes from behind Dustin.

"Oh my god," Lyn waves her hands for them to stop. She had never been more mortified by them before. Steve was beam with pride next to her. He loves coming there because of the warm welcome he got every time. "This is a first date, not a wedding reception." She snaps at them.

"We should start preparing those speeches." Dustin turns to his mom.

"We are leaving, you loonies." She drags Steve out of the house. They got into his BMW. "I'm sorry about them. Next time you can honk the horn and I'll come out." She put on her seatbelt.

"They're just excited about our first date, I'm sure by the third they won't care." He shrugs and pulls out of the driveway.

She turns on the radio and they sang along to Tina Turner *What's Love Got To Do with It* and then *Ain't Nobody* by Chaka Khan. Steve turns into the mall's parking lot as Madonna's *Like A Virgin* played.

They got out of the car and made their way into Star Court Mall. Steve wraps an arm around her waist as they walk around the mall looking at all the stores. "Oh, Waldenbooks," She pulls him into the store.

"Ew, a few more months and we never have to look at another book again. Why would you want to be here?" Steve pretends to gag.

"I want this to be a good date, so I'm going to ignore that comment." She picks up a book and read the back for the summary. She put it

down and did the same to another book that was further down the shelf. She took out a small book and pen from her purse.

"What are you doing?" Steve looks over her shoulder to see what she was writing.

"I'm writing down the title, so I remember it when they have their summary reading sale." She put her notepad and pen back in her purse.

"Do you need to get anything while you're here?" He asks.

"I want to get makeup starter kits for Max and El from Claire's." She led him out of the store.

"Max isn't the type to wear makeup." He places his arm back around her.

"Why cause she's a skater?" She looks up at him.

"No, because she's an unapologetic tomboy, even at the Snow Ball she was wearing a sweater, jeans, and no makeup." He points out to her.

"Then what do I get Max?" She would feel funny only getting El something. She wanted Max to feel like part of the group, especially with all the attitude Mike gave her in the beginning.

"Hair clips or something, she is going to need it with those wild red curls." He shrugs.

"That's a good idea." She nods. They went into the store and got the girl's things.

"Should we get something for the boys?" He carried her shopping bag out of the store.

"Why?" She shrugs. There was a lot that came with becoming a woman. She wasn't sure what came with becoming a man.

"I don't want them thinking we're playing favorites. I love all my kids equally." Steve told her in a matter of fact kind of way.

"You are such a liar, Dustin is your favorite." She laughs, shaking her head at him.

"SSSSHHHH, no one supposes to know that." He put a finger against his lips.

"I'm pretty sure everyone knows that. Oh, look Chess King is having a two for one sale." She points to the man's retail store. Steve drags her in and they pick out four shirts for the boys.

Steve held the two bags in his one hand and held Lyn's hand in the other when they walk out of the store. "Oh, look Lovelace Lingerie." He wiggles his eyebrows.

"Let's not get ahead of yourself," She rolls her eyes.

"Who said it was for you?" He scoffs.

"In that case, I think you would look great in a red lace thong." She giggles. A loud throat clearing made the young couple look over to see an elderly couple glaring at them. Steve and Lyn began laughing loudly making the elderly pair walk away grumbling under their breath.

"Come on, it's not a date unless I feed you." Steve pulls her to the food court.

"I like the sound of that." She looks around the food court. Lyn went to Panda Imperial. She got chow fun and sesame chicken. Steve got a burger and fries from Wyatt's Cafeteria.

They sat down at one of the many small tables that were in the middle of all the restaurants.

"Did the guys tell you about the new thing they're building?" Steve asks.

"Let not talk about kids... oh my god, it's our first date and we already sound like an old married couple." Lyn giggles. Steve joined in, laughing. He never felt more comfortable on a first date before. Normally, it was an awkward interviewing process over the food, but he already knew her favorite color, movies, and how she took her

coffee.

"Tell me something I don't know." He shoves a fry into his mouth.

"When I was a kid I was obsessed with Winnie the Pooh. Every Halloween I was a character from it. I was Pooh, Tiger, Piglet, Eeyore, Rabbit, and Christopher Robin." She lists them.

"Christopher Robin, why didn't you go as Owl or Roo?" He raises an eyebrow.

"I felt bad that no one ever dress up as him." She uses the chopsticks to put a piece of chicken in her mouth.

"That's so cute." He reaches across the table to pinch her cheek.

"Your turn," She slaps his hand off of her face.

"A facial is part of my night routine." He told her.

She moves her chair, so she was next to him. She cups his face and runs her thumbs along it. "I want to know your secret because your skin is silky smooth. Which is incredible since you got it beat in twice already."

"That feels good." He leans into her hands when she rubbed his temples. He let out a moan making her laugh.

"I haven't even got you in the bedroom." She moves her chair back in front of her plate.

"Says the virgin," He teases.

"You'll be surprised what you can learn from books." She winks at him.

"So, here we are at your front doorstep." He sways on the spot. "What will it be, a handshake, a hug, a kiss?"

She laughs and pulls him down by his collar to give him a kiss.

"Come on sis, at least make him work for it." Dustin opens the front door to break them up.

"Stop spying you creep." Lyn pushes him by his face inside and slams the door shut.

"Do you think it would break his heart to know that you kissed me before the first date." He laughs.

"What?" Dustin yells through the door.

"I'm going to kill you." Lyn opens the door. He falls face-first on the doormat. "Serve you right brat." She steps over him.

"I don't know why you guys are hanging out here anyway. Steve is staying for dinner." Dustin got up and dusted himself off.

"I can't wait for you to get a girlfriend, so I can interrupt your fun." Steve gave him a thud on the back of the head as he went inside.

"Oh, come on man." Dustin ran inside after his friend.

19. Prom

Rosalyn bit her bottom lip as she sews white pearl beads onto the white lace dress that was on the mannequin. When she finished the design she took a step back to double-check the beautiful but complicated design made of gold sparkling sequin trim, black beads and white pearls that were on the front of the dress. It went along the sweetheart neckline and end above the pelvic bone. "One done and seven more to go," She uses her forearm to wipe her brow. "Shit, why did I decided on this design." She sighs.

"LYN, STEVE IS TRYING TO SNEAK IN THROUGH THE WINDOW!" Dustin screams from outside.

"DUDE!" Steve yells. Lyn pushes the mannequin behind her sewing armoire and went to the window. She looks out to see Steve jumping down from the tree. She locks the window and closes her curtains. She went back to doing the pearl designs.

She was able to do three more until she heard someone messing around with the lock on her door. "ROSALYN, STEVE IS TRYING TO PICK THE LOCK ON YOUR DOOR!" Dustin knocks on her door.

"WHAT THE HELL IS YOUR PROBLEM!" Steve yells at his friend.

"I could use a break anyway." Lyn got up to open her door enough for her to slip out and lock it.

"She's blackmailing me." Dustin points to his sister.

"What?" Steve turns to his girlfriend.

"I found playboys under his bed. I told him, if he doesn't keep you out of my room I would tell mom. Now I'm going to blackmail you." She pokes her finger into his chest.

"What?" Steve gasp, put his hand over the spot she poked.

"If you don't stop trying to get a peek at my prom dress, I'm going to tell my mom that you gave them to him. See how much she likes her Stevey then?" She glares at him.

"I would never do something like that." He let out a nervous laugh and Dustin join in.

"Yeah, you're both look so innocent right now." She rolls her eyes.

"I need to see the dress. How will I know what tie and corsage to get?" He whines.

"I told you to get a gold tie and white corsage." She grabs his hand.
"Now, come on I'll bake the cookies you like." She tugged him along.

"Oh, can I lick the bowl?" Steve bounces around.

"If you're a good boy," She looks back to wink at him.

"Ew, I told you no flirting in front of me," Dustin fake gags.

Lyn read through the magazine that gave a step by step tutorial on how to do Farrah Fawcett's famous hairstyle. "Steve, better appreciate me." She mutters when she realizes how much time this was going to take. Leaving the magazine open on her vanity, she got started. She put a big blob of mousse in her hand and ran it through her hair. When her hair was coated in it, she uses a comb to part her hair in the center. She clips the top layer of her hair to the top of her head.

She grabs her curling iron and set it to 350 degrees, so it would be able to manipulate her hair. When the red light flashes on to show it was at the degree she wanted, she grabs the beauty tool. In small sections, she curls the bottom layer of her hair away from her face, making sure to leave the tips alone to give herself a more feathered look.

It took her about 45 minutes to finish curling the bottom layer and another 45 to do the same to the top layer. She curls and blows dry her bangs before applying the Farrah Fawcett's setting spray that Dustin had in his room.

She wiggles her arms that were sore from curling her hair. "Come on, we aren't finished yet." She gave them a pep talk. She opens a drawer that had her makeup. She painted her lips red, her cheeks a pinkish brown, and her eyes brown with gold glitter.

She slid on the white lace dress with the fancy design on the front. "Okay, Dustin I need you to zip me up." She pounded her fist on the wall that separated their rooms.

"Okay, I'm just feeding Yertle." He yells through the walls.

"Wash and dry your hands first." She yells back to him. She held the white lace dress close to her chest as she waited for him.

"I'm here with clean hands." He came into the room with hands up to show proof. Lyn turns around to have him zip her up.

"Thank you." She sat down on her vanity chair to use the mirror to put on her small white hoop earrings. She slid on her white pumps.

"What do you need to take a purse for? I know you're taking your car, but isn't Steve still driving and paying tonight?" Dustin grabs her white clutch with the gold handle that was on her bed.

"He is. I'm bringing this to complete my look." Lyn snatches it out of his hands before he could open it.

"Oh yeah, because without the purse people will feel like something is missing?" His words drip with sarcasm.

"Exactly," Lyn chose to ignore his tone.

"Prince charming is here." Her mom screams from her rocking chair in the living room.

"I'll get the door." Dustin ran out of the room.

"You little shit. You know I can't run in these heels." She rushes after him, but by the time she made it around the corner, Dustin had already got the door.

Steve stares at her with his jaw slacked. "Oh my...I... you look..." He clears his throat, trying to gather himself.

"I can't tell if he thinks you look good or awful." Dustin narrows his eyes at him.

"I think you look good, better than good. Beautiful, gorgeous, glamorous," He lists off compliments, not wanting Rosalyn to think that he thought she looked bad.

"And you look handsome, hot, sexy," She smiles at his rambling. She walks over and fixes the white rose boutonniere that was pinned onto his black tuxedo jacket.

"I got you, your corsage." He held up a sparkling white ribbon that had three white roses attached to it.

"Thank you." She gave him a kiss on the cheek before holding out her arm for him to put it on. He slips it onto her wrist.

"It's Picture Time!" Her mom screams. They got blind by the flashing light when they turn to face her.

"Do a cute pose for me? Lyn kisses his cheek again." She instructed. Lyn did as her mom asked and kissed Steve on the cheek. A click and a flash came from the camera.

"Oh, Steve dips her like you're dancing," Dustin said making their mom squeal in excitement.

"How many poses did we do?" Steve pulls out Lyn's chair for her to sit down before taking a seat himself.

"I lost count after 13." Lyn whines. She was ready to choke Dustin when he started looking through magazines for more poses. Her mom would still be taking pictures of them if the camera didn't run out of film.

"Hello, Rudy, Violet, Amanda, Andrew." Lyn greets her friends from the bookworm table. They were forced to go to prom by their parents, so like lunch, they decided to sit together.

"Do you know who the other four is?" Rudy nodded his head to the four empty chairs.

"Stop worrying about it. It'll be other outcasts like us. Not like any of the other popular idiots are going to want to sit with us." Violet rolls

her eyes. "No offense, Steve." She turns to the once self-proclaimed man on campus.

"None taken," He said slowly, which gave away that he was indeed offended.

"Even if its popular jerks, so what? It would take a true psycho to sit with us just to ruin our night." Andrew took a sip from the punch in front of him.

"I know a few." Lyn groans when Billy and Tommy lead their dates over to their table. Everyone turned to see who was coming their way.

"Oh my god, I knew we should have found four other people to sit with us." Rudy slams his palm into his forehead.

"Guys, what does it matter? We only have to sit here for dinner. Then after we can spend the night on the dance floor." Steve wiggles in his seat and wave his hands in the air. Lyn elbows his side to stop him. This wasn't the group that would be excited about that.

"I don't know how to dance." Rudy looks ready to hyperventilate.

"I'm sure they'll dance." Amanda rubs her boyfriend's back to calm him down.

"You're right. Thanks." He took a deep breath before giving her a kiss.

"Oh, nerdy love," Carol let out a mocking sigh as she drops down on the chair next to Violet, who moved her chair away from her and closer to Andrew.

"It's adorable." Tommy chuckled taking a seat next to his girlfriend.

"Hey Steve-o," Billy took the chair next to him. His date, Nicole quietly took the seat between him and Tommy.

"Fuck you, Hargrove." Steve grits his teeth.

"Whoa, calm down man," He put his hands up like he was surrendering.

"Where is a bat with nails when you need one?" Lyn pushes her lips together like she was really thinking. Billy glares at her. Steve let out a smug laugh and wraps an arm around the back of her chair.

"How oddly specific," Violet raised an eyebrow at her book buddy. Everyone else had the same confused expression on their faces.

"I just think it would be a cool weapon." She shrugs her shoulders.

"I can make one for you." Steve winks at her. She put her hand over her heart and pretends to swoon, falling limp against him.

"Oh," She springs back to life when a plate of food was placed in front of her.

"I want a man with a slow hand. I want a lover with an easy touch. I want somebody who will spend some time. Not come and go in a heated rush. I want somebody who will understand when it comes to love, I want a slow hand." The Pointer Sister was playing on the stereo. Lyn and Steve's arms were wrapped around each other as they sway. Lyn tense up at the slow sexual song, she curses whoever made the playlist.

"Are you alright?" Steve rubs her back when she twitches again.

"What? I'm fine. Why would you even ask that?" She asks defensively.

"Maybe because anytime a suggestive song comes on, you became an awkward mess. Look, you shouldn't feel pressured to do anything. I like the way things are." Steve told her.

"With you doing all the work and me just taking." Lyn scoff. The poor guy had to rub one out after taking care of her. Every time she told herself that she would try to give him some relief, but her nerves always got the best of her. She was scared of disappointing her experienced boyfriend.

"I'm grateful to be between your legs no matter what." He whispers into her ear. She shoves her face into his chest to hide her blushing face.

"Hello class of 1985, the votes are in. We have your prom king and queen." The Principle spoke into the microphone and wave an envelope around in the air. "The prom king is BILLY HARGROVE. The prom queen is NICOLE ANDERSON." He screams out their names. They made their way up to the stage to get crowned.

"Just great, something else for him to brag about," Steve sighs.

"Everyone clear the dance floor for the king and queen." The principles instructed them.

Lyn pulls the pouting Steve back to their table. "Where did your friends go?" Steve looks around the empty table.

"They left after taking pictures. This really isn't their scene." She shrugs.

She rolls her eyes when Tommy and Carol join them. "Doesn't Billy look great as prom king?" Carol throws a smug look at Steve.

"I think Nicole looks beautiful as prom queen, that gold crown on top of her red hair. I can see why she won. I'm glad I voted for her." Lyn smiled at Carol, twisting the metaphorical knife around. She knew that Carol was hoping to be prom queen.

"Come on babe, we can dance again." Tom pulls his girlfriend away before she explodes.

"I love that we hate the same people." Steve gave her a kiss to the temple. "Do you want to dance?" He asks her.

"I want to do something else." She opens up her clutch and took out a key to drop it into his hand.

"Motel 6," He read the keychain that was attached to the key. "The one on Cornwallis?" He looks up at his girlfriend.

"I'm ready. I know it might not seem that way with how nervous I've been. But, I promise its excited nerves." She opens her purse to show him the condoms she had inside.

"I'm ready too. Do you want to go now?" He jumps out of his seat.

"We can, yeah." She got up. Steve grabs her hand and pulls her along to the car. There was a tense silence as Steve speed to the motel.

"We're here." Steve beam at her.

"Wait, before we go in. I need to let you know that I might not be as good as the other girls you been with. At least not tonight, but I promise I'll do what I can do to get better." She grabs his hand before he could get out of the car.

"Babe, don't worry. You're going to be great. Soon, we'll be acting out scenes from your smut books." He gave her an obnoxious wink. She laughs and grabs her backpack from the backseat. They got out of the car. She leads him to the room she rented.

Steve took the keys out of his pocket and unlocks the door. "This is a lot cleaner than I thought it would be." He looks around impressed by the place.

"I came this morning. I change the sheets and clean the place top to bottom." Lyn drops the backpack on the small dining table in the corner.

"What's in the backpack?" He nods to it.

"A change of clothes for each of us and toiletries," She told him.

"Did I ever tell you how attractive it is when you think of everything?" He bites his bottom lip and gave her a seductive look as he ran a hand through his hair.

She let out a laugh at his dirty talk. "Come over and unzip me." She turns her back to him.

"Whoa, you're not wearing a bra." His jaw drops along with her dress.

"It's a corset, I don't need one." She reaches out to unbutton the dress shirt he had on. When she was finished he shrugs off the jacket and shirt.

"Alright, now that all the nipples are out, let's get you on the bed." He scoops her up and throws her on the bed. He enjoys watching her

breasts bounce from the movement. He took the rest of his clothes off. He slides her panties down before jumping on top of her. He gave her a passionate kiss on the lips before beginning a trail to her lower lips.

She gasps and proper herself up on her elbows. Nothing turned her on more, then watching him eat her out. "Oh fuck, Steve." Her body spasms when he curled his tongue and fingers inside of her.

Lyn closes her eyes to savor the moment. She always thought the smut she read exaggerates about the experience of an orgasm. While she didn't blackout or sees stars, it was definitely the best natural high she ever felt.

She opens her eyes when she felt Steve move off the bed. She watched as he took a condom from her purse and rolls it onto his cock. "You ready?" He looks over at her to see she was staring at his privates.

"Yup," She swallows the lump in her throat. She's seen it before, but now it seems bigger than she ever has seen it before.

He crawls on top of her and settles between her legs; because of the orgasm she just had he was able to slide in without much resistance. Both of them let out a hiss, once from pleasure and the other from pain.

"Shit, do you want me to pull out?" He asks when he looks down and saw tears in her eyes.

"No, no just go slow." She took a deep breath. It was a sharp pain when he first entered and now it was dull stingy. She was hoping if he kept going pleasure would be around the corner.

"Okay," He nods his head. He moves hips as slowly as he could. He kisses and sucks on her sweet spot that was located where her collarbone meets her neck. His one hand pinch and pull on her nipples, while the other rub her clit. He was hoping to distract her from the pain she was feeling. Her stillness was getting him flustered like he was the virgin. He didn't want her first time to be a completely horrible experience. He never felt more relieved when she

wraps her legs around his waist and move her hips along with him.

"Go faster," She demands. The slow thrusts were no longer welcome, it felt like teasing. She could feel the familiar tightness building up in her lower abdomen. She knows from both Steve and herself exploring her body that she couldn't explode the way she likes to at a slow pace.

He gave her an open mouth kiss as he did what he was told. She kisses him back and ran her nails along his scalp in the way he likes. She wanted to make up for laying there like a dead fish.

"Oh shit, I'm going to cum." Steve pulls away when he felt himself at the edge. "You got to cum first." He gave her clit a pinch.

"Fuck," Her body jerks, the bit of pain heighten her pleasure. "Can you bite the sweet spot?" Her hand brushes over her collar bone. She didn't know where it came from; it just pops in her head. She decided to follow her instincts and asks.

"How hard?" He halts his thrust in surprises from the request.

"Just enough to leave a dark Hickie," She moves her hips more. Steve nods his head and picks the pace back up. When he didn't do it right away, she thought it was too weird for him. He curses again about cumming before he launches forward and biting her.

"Yes, yes, yes, yes." She chants. The combination of pain, pleasure, and the new sensation of Steve feeling up the condom inside of her push her over the edge.

He rolled off her to take the condom off. He tied the end of it before throwing it in the trash. She got off the bed and waddle to the bathroom. After cleaning herself up, she went back to the bedroom. "Come here." Steve opens his arms to welcome her back in bed. She climbs onto the bed and lay in his arms.

"Besides the slow start, it was good for you right?" She stares down at the comforter.

"It was perfect." He yawns.

"Really?" She looks up at him.

"Better than I imagine like every moment with you." He flashed her a tired smile.

She gave him a peck on the lips. "I love you, Steve. Goodnight." She gave him another peck before laying her head on his chest to go to sleep.

"I love you too, Rosalyn." He kisses her forehead.

20. Graduation

Steve walks into Rosalyn's room to find her pacing, stopping once in a while to write an idea down. "Hey babe, you alright," He grabs her arm.

"Yeah, I'm great. Why wouldn't I be?" She pulls away from him to cross her arms over her chest.

"I don't know, I come in and Dustin tells me you're being obsessive. I find you here pacing with paper balls everywhere." He kicks a paper ball.

"I'm just coming up with alternatives." She walked over to the vanity to grab the paper and hands it to him.

"Seamstress, help mom start catering business, mechanic, partner up with Steve in whatever his parents do. What is this list?" He held the paper up.

"I'm brainstorming other options. It's stupid to be putting all my eggs in one basket. What if Vet Tech doesn't work out? I would be wasting people's time and money. I wouldn't be able to look Dr. Myung in the face ever again." She pulls at the ends of her hair.

"Oh, so that's what this is about you're scared to let your boss down." Steve let out a sigh of relief that he was able to figure it out.

"She's more than a boss. She's like a second mother. She saw a crying 14-year-old who didn't know how she was supposed to pay a pricey vet bill and gave her a job. She has stayed by my side throughout the years. She gave me as many hours as she could when she knew I need money for something. She's given me advice and helps out with my homework. I wouldn't have made it without her." She wipes the frustrated tears from her eyes.

"Babe, you torture yourself with this before. Sewing and knitting is a labor of love that you do for yourself, friends, and family. Mechanics is something you hate. You only do it to save money. If you have to go into business with your mom, you would lose your mind. I don't

even want to do what my dad does. You love your job. I don't know anyone else who excited to go to work. We did a pro and con list and Vet Tech won by a landslide." He had walked with her through it all last week when she got her acceptations letter for the vet tech program.

"But, what if I can't do it, what if I fail all my classes?" She pulls at the roots of her hair.

"I'm sorry, when does Rosalyn Henderson fail at anything?" He let out a laugh.

"There first time for anything." She let out a puff of air.

"You got me, your mom, and the kids cheering you on. And Dr. Myung has already offered to be your study buddy anytime you need it. Most of all you have a passion for animals. You're not going to fail." He cups her face to wipe away her tears. She stares up at Steve, not remembering him ever looking as beautiful as he looks at that moment. She knew if she told him that, he would argue that he is handsome, not beautiful.

Instead of telling him and ruining the moment, she rises up on her tippy toes and pushes her lips on his. As always, Steve had an automatic reaction to her touching him. His hands went from her face to being tangled in her hair.

"OH, MY EYES, MY VIRGIN EYES!" Lyn and Steve pull away from each other to see Dustin rolling around on the ground with his hands over his eyes.

"Stop being a drama queen, you didn't even see anything," Steve scoffs.

"Your tongues were in each other's mouths." Dustin screeches from the floor.

"Shut up." Lyn bent down to hiss at him. She didn't want her mother hearing that. She didn't want to have another awkward moment like with the condom on Halloween night.

"Why did you just burst in here anyways?" Steve rolled his eyes at the

boy still wiggling on the floor like he was in pain.

"Did you forget why you came over?" Dustin got off the ground and dust himself off.

"Oh, that's right, we're having a boys day. Bye babe." He gave Lyn a kiss before leaving the room with Dustin.

At the sound of paper tearing, Lyn looks down. "No Tews that is not a toy." She picks up the kitten that was ripping up the paper balls she left on the floor. She put her down on the bed and gave her a ball of yarn to play with while she picks up the paper balls. When she was done, she sat down on the bed and played with Tews.

When Tews got tired, she crawled into Lyn's lap to curl up for a nap. Lyn felt a tug on her heartstrings looking down at the sleeping cat. "No, I'm breaking the cycle of needing someone to always be there. I'll be starting college soon, so I don't have time for a pet anyways." She told herself when the idea popped in her head. She had been feeling a want in her chest when she watches anyone with their pets whether it be her mom, brother, or customers at work.

Lyn was staring down at her black glitter tights and black pumps. Her tassel hit her in the face when straight out of the green gown that was swallowing her. She moves the tassel back to the side.

"I love your hair, did you sleep in curlers?" Alice Hunter was sitting to her right. If they didn't separate the males and females, she would have been sitting by Steve. At least she was going to be on the stage at the same time as him.

"Yeah, I like your sandals." She nods to the other girl's feet.

"Thank you, so what are you doing after this?" Alice asks. Everyone else in their row stood up saving Lyn from anymore small talk. "Oh, it's time." The peppy blonde hops out of her chair.

Lyn stood up and follow the line up to the stage. She took a deep breath with every name that got called before her. She kept telling herself that it was simple. All she had to do was shake the teacher's

hand, grab the diploma holder, and walk down the steps back to her seat. She couldn't get the image of her falling at every step of the process out of her head.

"Steve Harrington." The principle called. She watches as a smiling Steve shook Mr. Crane's hand, grab the diploma, move his tassel to the other side.

"Rosalyn Henderson." The principle called next. She took a deep breath and with shaking knees, she walks over to Mrs. Gingham, the trigonometry teacher.

"Congratulations, Rosalyn." She hands her the diploma holder.

"Thank you." She took the holder before shaking the teacher's hand. She moves her tassel as she walks over to Steve. She hooks her arms with his and they walk down the stairs that were in front of the stage.

"Hopefully this wouldn't be the last time we walk down the aisle together." He winks at her.

"You're so cheesy, Steve. It's disgusting." Lyn turns her face, so he wouldn't see her burning cheeks.

"Yeah, that's why you're blushing." He kisses her cheek before separating with her to go back to his seat.

"Guess that makes me disgusting too." She chuckled under her breath as she went back to her chair.

"Okay, one more group picture and then I take this gown off. It's getting hot." Lyn announces to her family and friends that came over to her house after graduation.

"You can't take it off yet. I want to get a picture of you and Steve with your gowns on." Her mother whines.

"I'll put it back on when he gets here." She promises her. Steve was having dinner with his parents then coming over.

"Everyone gather up." Claudia waves everyone over. The kids ran to

surround Lyn. Everyone else squeezes together to get into the shot. "Okay, the timer is on." Her mom put the camera on the stand and ran over to get in the picture. She was able to stand and smile next to Dr. Myung before the camera flashed.

"Alright, everyone time to eat." She claps her hands. The kids charge into the kitchen, where Claudia sets up all of Lyn's favorite foods in a buffet style. Lyn laughs and took her gown off to reveal a pink off the shoulder knitted dress.

"Hey, let the woman of the hour make her plate first." Joyce scolds them. Lyn stuck her tongue out at them as she went to the front of the line. She put a little bit of everything on her plate. When she sat down on the dining table, the doorbell rang.

"That's Steve, Lyn gets the door." Dustin points his fork at the door. She looks up from her plate to see that everyone was staring at her.

"Okay," She got up and walked to the door. "That was a fast dinner." She opens the door for her boyfriend.

"Can you come outside for a second?" He took a step back.

"Yeah, I can." She closes the door. He normally greets her with a hug, a kiss, and a corny pet name. So, to have him standing away from her with his hands in his jacket was nerve-racking.

"I know we said no graduation gifts, but this is not just from me. It's from your mom, Dustin, and me." He pulls out a tiny puppy that fits in the palm of his hand from his jacket.

"Is that one of Mrs. Crankshaw puppies?" Lyn remembers the old lady brings in the litter of Boston Terrier and Pug mixes to the vet for a checkup.

"Yup, she is the very one you were taken with according to Dr. Myung. I know you think a pet going to turn you into your mother. But, there is nothing wrong with wanting to take care of something. It's honorable and noble when you think about it." Steve rambled. She said she didn't want a pet, but he saw the look she would get when she watched her mother and Tews. She wanted that kind of bond and

he didn't see why he shouldn't give that to her.

As soon as Lyn's eyes fell on the puppy every insecure of ending up like her mom went out the window, "I'm going to name her Zoey." She took the puppy from Steve and ran into the house. "Look what Steve got me." She screams holding the dog up. Everyone who already knew about the surprised acted faked shocked.

Steve laugh in relief, he thought it was going to be more of a fight for her to accept the dog. He grabs a bag of dog supplies from his car. He walks into the house to see Lyn sitting on the floor with Mike, Dustin, Lucas, Will, El, and Max. Zoey was in the middle of the group. She seems to like all the attention she was getting by how fast her tail was wagging. "Babe, come here. Dustin is showing us how he taught her to sit." She waves for him to come over.

"What, I taught her that!" Steve sat down next to her on the floor.

"Well, I was there when it happened. Really, it was a group effort." Dustin defends himself.

"What did you do, pass him the treats?" Lucas mocks him.

"How did you know?" Dustin asks, clueless to the fact that Lucas was making fun of him. It got a laugh from everyone else in the room. "What is so laugh? I'll have you know that the treats are the most important part. She only sits for the treat." He put his hands on his hips.

"Thank you for this." Lyn wraps an arm around Steve's waist and laid her head on his shoulder. "It was nothing. I had a lot of help from Dustin and the guys." He shrugs his shoulder. That was a lie; it was difficult to hide the dog from both her and his parents, who would have flipped out if they saw it in his room.

"Don't sell yourself short. This was an amazingly thoughtful gift." She gave him a peck on the lips.

"Not in front of the children." Joyce teased.

"Please, there two couples among them." Steve points at Max and Lucas and then El and Mike.

"What?" Hopper screams.

If you wish to see pictures of Zoey, you can see it on my tumblr:
thegoooddogpack

21. Movies and Goodbyes

Lyn let out a high pitched giggle as she rolls off of Steve. "By the noises you made, I would say that I'm getting good at this." She smirks at her daze boyfriend.

"You're amazing." He looks up at the ceiling with a dopey smile on his face.

"Shit, Steve we're going to be late for the movies. Dustin is waiting for us." The clock on the wall alerts her. They jump out of bed and clumsily gather their clothes to put them on. She put on her purple lacey thong and bra. She picks up her blue plaid skirt and white camisole from Steve's bedroom floor and put them on. She put on her black peep-toe heels over her white lacey socks. She grabs Steve's gray bomber jacket from his closet and put it on.

"Are you wearing my jacket?" Steve asks. Lyn turns around to see that he was wearing jeans, a white shirt, and a white and red jacket. He even manages to make his hair perfect again.

"It completes my outfit." She gave him a spin.

"It does look good on you." He leers at her.

"Don't give me that look. We don't have time for that." She shook a finger at him.

"You're right, we got to go now." He looks up at the clock and grabs his keys off the hook on the wall by his door.

"I have to fix my makeup and hair." She points at the mirror that shows her smeared makeup and messed up hair.

"You'll have to fix it in the car." He throws her purse at her and drags her to the BMW. While he drove to the mall, she was able to make her hair look like a styled mess. She was able to fix most of the make-up. Her eye shadow was darker and heavier than she would have liked. Luckily, it was the in look right now so she wouldn't get any strange looks for it.

Steve parks the car and they rush to the ticket booth. "Can we get two tickets to The Goonies for the 7 o'clock showing?" Steve slides the money under the glass window. They were regulars here, so he already knows how much two tickets would be.

"You better hurry the commercials are starting to play." He slides two tickets to them. "Enjoy the movie, Rosalyn." He gave her a big smile.

"Thank you, Carson." Lyn gave him a nod before pulling Steve into the theatre.

"I hate that guy. He has some nerve, every time he got to try to put the moves on you." He grumbled under his breath.

"Oh please, you don't get to complain when every female worker in here flirts with you. Speaking of which look it is Jennifer." She rolls her eyes as she mockingly said the girl's name.

"Hey Jennifer," He walks up to the counter.

"Hey, Steve you're usual?" She bats her eyelashes at him.

"Yeah, you know it." He nods to her.

"Who's the lucky girl tonight?" She nods over at Lyn, who had to grit her teeth to stop from reaching across the counter to slap her.

"The same girl as every night, my girlfriend," He laughs awkwardly and wraps his arms around her.

"Do you want anything?" Jennifer gave her a fake smile.

"Can I get a hotdog and a coke? Steve helped me work up an appetite before we got here. " Lyn pats him on the chest. While Steve was blushing, he also had a smug smile on his face.

"Coming right up," Jennifer glares at her. She made Steve extra-large popcorn and coke before doing Lyn's order.

"I hope you know she's spitting on your hotdog," Steve whispers to her when Jennifer turns her back to them to make it.

"I'll give it to Dustin." She shrugs her shoulders, knowing that the boy wouldn't mind. Especially if he knows it was a hot girl's spit.

After they got her soda and hotdog, they race to the theatre three. They were able to find Dustin sitting with an empty seat on each side of him. Ever since Steve pulls her into a kiss on a boring movie, Dustin made it a point to sit in-between them. "You're late." Her brother scolds Lyn.

"And as an apology, I got you a hotdog." She hands it to him.

"I accept your apology." He took it from her before ripping the bucket of popcorn from Steve's hands, making some fall on her. She didn't mind considering most of it fell on Steve who was talking to Tracey, a pretty girl that was in Nancy's year.

"You're late," Dustin told him.

"The movies haven't even started yet." Steve points to the screen that was playing a coke commercial.

"Do you know how many people wanted your seat, specifically girls, girls that I now could be sitting with?" Dustin pointed at the seat that he saved for Steve.

"What were you going to do woo them with this denim vest? How many times do I have to tell you to stop wearing that?" Steve reached out to tug on the ugly vest that her brother seems fond of.

Dustin looks a little hurt by Steve's opinion. He picks up his milk duds and pouring it into the popcorn while giving his best friend a hard stare. "For the hundred times don't pour the whole thing in. Not everyone likes chocolate on their popcorn." Lyn punches her brother in the shoulder. Dustin let out a yep.

"Why did you do that?" Steve arches an eyebrow.

"It better this way, sweet and salty in a single bite." He pushes a piece of popcorn and chocolate into his mouth.

Steve copies him and hum at the deliciousness going on in his mouth. "Henderson, you're a genius." Lyn rolls her eyes at the two idiots she

was with.

"Tell me something I don't know." Dustin smiles. They tap their drinks together before turning to the screen that said our feature presents. The screen began to flicker before it went blank. Steve and Dustin look at each other before booing at the screen.

"Oh come on, I didn't even get to see Josh Brolin!" Lyn yells at the screen.

"Who?" Steve and Dustin turn to her.

"That's the actor who plays the older brother." She told them.

"Did you pick this movie to check out a guy?" Steve gasps at her.

"Oh, please like we didn't watch Weird Science last week for Kelly LeBrock." She scoffs.

"I didn't pick that movie, your brother did." He points at Dustin.

"But, I did pick it for hot Kelly," Dustin nod to Steve in agreement with his sister.

"You damn horny Henderson's." Steve mutter under his breath as the screen came back to life.

"Thirty bottles of beer on the wall, thirty bottles of beer. Take one down and pass it around, twenty-nine bottles of beer on the wall." Steve and the kids were singing in the car. Being that they started at fifty, Lyn was at her wit's end.

"Okay, shut up we're here." She jumped out of the van bring her knitted beach bag with her. Despite being annoyed, she waited for them to get out of the van.

"If you join in on the fun, you wouldn't be so grumpy." Steve wrapped an arm around her shoulders. She only scoffs in response. The older teens lead the pack into Hawkins Community Pool.

"You said he wasn't working Max," Lucas whines when he saw his

girlfriend's stepbrother on the lifeguard chair.

"Let's what he said this morning," Max defends herself.

"Just don't run or do any dives and he can't bother us." Lyn didn't pause in her stride over to the empty chaise lounge chairs that were the furthest away from Billy's chair. She drops her bag by one of the chairs before laying down in it. She looks over to see if the asshole notices they were there. Billy didn't seem to notice yet. The chairs surround him were filled with desperate women begging for his attention. Lyn only pauses for a second when she saw that Mrs. Wheeler was one of those women. She quickly shook her head, telling herself it wasn't any of her business.

The group came over and put their bags under the few chairs that they claimed. "Sunscreen before anyone goes in." Steve reminds them, making them groan.

Lyn giggles as she unzips her long red jacket to reveal her two-piece black floral bathing suit. They didn't sell plus size two-pieces, so she bought a one-piece and customized it. The bottom was high waist and the sides were cut out. For the top, she trades the thick straps for a more stylish criss-cross four straps. She sews in a wire bra for extra support.

Steve let out a low whistle. "Do you need help putting on sunscreen?"

She giggles at his stare that was half-lidded and full of lust. "I'll let you know when I'm ready for my back to be done." She winks at him. She put on a slow seductive show of rubbing sunscreen on her legs, stomach, arms, shoulders, and chest. "I'm rea..." She didn't get to finish saying before Steve jumps behind her.

He massages the sunscreen into her skin. "Such a naughty minx," He whispers into her ear before giving her a kiss on the shoulder.

A loud whistle cut through the air making everyone pause in their movements. "None of that hanky panky, this is a family place," Bill shouted at them from his chair.

"Still a fucking ass," Steve curses. Lyn nods her head in agreement as

she looks around to see that the young teens she came with were in the pool already.

She pulls her Tweety bird towel out of her bag and laid it on the back of the chair for when she got out of the pool. Steve put sunscreen on himself before handing the tube back to his girlfriend. "We already have one strike, so try to control yourself," He smirks.

"I'm not the one who got us the first strike." She squeezes some sunscreen on her hand before rubbing it on his back.

"You knew what you were doing putting on that soft porn." He scoffs.

"I don't know what you're talking about. I was simply trying to protect myself from the sun's harmful rays." She said getting another scoff from her boyfriend.

"Hurry up with your hanky panky, Steve. We need you guys for our game of volleyball." He throws the small beach ball, they brought with them, at him.

"Alright, I'm coming in five minutes when my sunscreen has settled in." He throws the ball back at him. Dustin groans dramatically.

In the five minutes, Steve laid back on the lounge chair next to her to annoy Dustin some more. Lyn smiles, she enjoyed their brotherly moments.

"It's been five minutes." Dustin slams his hands down on the water making a big splash.

"Watch yourself Henderson!" Billy blows the whistle at him.

"Sorry." He yelled over his shoulder to the lifeguard.

"Come on before he gets us thrown out of here." Lyn got up to pull her boyfriend up. They slip in where the kids were. Since there wasn't a net, it was less of a game of volleyball and them just hitting the ball to one another. At some points, Mike and El wander off.

"I'm hungry," Dustin announce and look over at his sister.

"Me too," Will nods his head.

"I'll get everyone a hotdog meal." Lyn swims over to the ladder and climbs out of the pool. Steve follows her knowing that she would need help to carry everything. She walks over to their chairs to see Mike and El sharing a milkshake.

"Did you guys want a hotdog?" Steve asks them.

"No thank you, we ate already," Mike told them but didn't break his stare from El.

Lyn laughs, grabbing her wallet from her bag. Steve and she walked over to the concession stand. "I'll take six hotdog meals." She orders for herself, Steve, Dustin, Lucas, Will, and Max.

"That will be 20 dollars." The worker said. She gave the money before moving to the side to wait for her food.

"I could have paid." Steve pouts, not liking when she paid for any things.

"You paid for the movies yesterday, besides you're not getting an allowance from your dad anymore." She reminds him. After Steve got rejected from Tech, his dad cut him off and was forcing him to get a job or he would be kicked out of the house. He had an interview at an ice cream shop at the mall next week.

"Don't remind me." He groans. The worker came over and gave them their orders that were on two trays. They each took one and walk back over to the chairs that the kids were sitting on. With the exception of El and Mike who were back in the water. Lyn passes out a drink, chip, and hotdog to each of them.

"Thanks, mom and dad." Max jokes.

"When we say dad, we mean Rosalyn." Lucas laughs.

"Excuse me, I am not the mom." Steve screech out.

"Sunscreen before anyone goes in." Will mocked him.

"She knits, mom knits." He points a finger at his girlfriend.

"She also the one that was able to fix the flat we got that one time." Dustin points out.

"You didn't know how to change it either." Steve defends himself.

"Enough, we aren't about to promote gender roles. We live in the 80s, not the 50s." Lyn ends the argument.

"Agreed," Max nods her head, even though she started it.

"Dads end arguments," Dustin whispers to Steve.

"Does he have to go?" Steve whines.

"Steve, we talk about this. Camp Know Where will be good for Dustin. He will broaden his knowledge and social skills. He will learn more independents in a controlled environment." Lyn reaches out to rub his arm in comfort. She was worried about Dustin going too. This would be the longest they ever been apart. Reassuring Steve helps calm her nerves as well.

"Come on you guys, we got to go now or Dusty will miss his bus," Claudia yells to them.

"Remember Steve, we can't make Dustin feel bad about this." She gave his shoulder a squeeze before grabs his hand and leading him outside.

Lyn climb into the passenger seat of the van while her mom took the driver's seat. Steve sat in the back with Dustin. While they drove to the drop off spot in Chicago, Dustin told them all about the activities the camp's brochure promised. Steve got choked up a couple of times, but he manages to pull it together.

Claudia parked the van in the parking lot of a park where they were a bunch of kids waiting around a bus. "Who knew this many kids like science?" Steve arches an eyebrow.

"Science is cool, of course, a lot of people like it." Dustin rolls his

eyes.

"Let's get you with the cool kids." Lyn got out of the passenger seat. Everyone else came out of the car after her. Steve grabs Dustin's suitcase for him. They got him signed in and put his suitcase on the back of the bus.

"Five minutes until we leave, it's time for your last goodbyes." A lady with a megaphone let them know.

"Last goodbyes? You're going to summer camp for a month, not off to war." Lyn rolls her eyes.

Claudia pulls Dustin into a tight hug. "I'm going to miss you so much my Dust Bunny." She sways him side to side as she gave him kisses all over his face.

"Mom," Dustin whines when he saw other kids watching them.

"Just great, he's going to be the nerd amongst the nerds now." Steve whines in the same manner.

When their mom let him go, Lyn pulls her brother into a hug. "Have fun, make friends, and don't get into any trouble." She pokes his forehead to emphasize her last point.

"How am I supposed to have fun when I can't get into trouble?" Dustin teases.

"Don't make me have to drive up here before I got to." She gave him a playful punch to the shoulder.

"You need to worry about not being bored to death. Like, seriously what are you going to do without me?" He gave her a smug smile that was eerily similar to her boyfriend's. She didn't know why she was surprised Dustin went out of his way to emulate Steve.

"She'll be doing me." Steve stuck his tongue out before pulling his friend into a bro hug.

"Come on, man." Dustin pretends to gag.

"Hope this summer filled with ladies for you, bud. Looking around I would say you're going to be the stud of the camp." He looks over at a boy using an inhaler.

"You think so," Dustin puffs his chest out.

"You're definitely the most handsome." Claudia reaches over to pinch her son's cheek.

"It's time to get on the bus, kids." Megaphone lady told them.

"I'll miss you guys." Dustin gave them a bright smile before running over to get in line.

The three of them stood there until the bus was out of their sight. "Oh my baby," Claudia cried into her hands.

"It's only a month mom." Lyn guides her mom to the van.

"It's not that, it's that my baby is growing up." She cried into her daughter's shoulder.

"I'll drive us back, babe." Steve follows after them.

Lyn throws him the keys and put her mom into the backseat. She got back into the passenger seat. Steve pulls out of the park and drove them in the direction of Hawkins. "I should have brought Tews." She looks back at her mom staring out of the window with tears running down her face.

"We know for when we drop him off to college." Steve shrugs. Lyn smiles, it always warms her heart when Steve spoke of their future together so casually.